P. F. Baum

C.T. Gaus . Frank Ernest Hill

Wm Van Wyck, ill. R Kent. Covici-F
1930. 2 vol.

'as I guess' . [Ch's + Am. usage]: Stuart Robertson,
MLN 48('33) 37-40

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Chaucer

In which there be som merthe or doctryne. Gladly qd I be goddis swete pyne
I wol you telle a litill thing in prose
That ought to like you as I suppose — It is a morall tale vertuous
All be it tolde sometyme in sondry wise
Of sondry folk as I shall you devise. And thus ye wot that any Euangelist
That tellith us the peyne of Jhu crist
Ne faith all thing as his felawes doth — But yet his sentence is all soth
And alle accorden as in her sentence
All be there in here telling difference. For som of hem more and som lesse
Whan thei his pitous passion expresse
I mene of Marc Matheu Luke and John — But douteles her sentence is all con
Therfor lordinges alle I you beseche
Yf that you thinke that I varye in my speche — As thus if I telle sondwhat more
Of proverbes than ye have herd before
Comprehendid in this litill tretice here — To enforce the effect of my matere.
And thouz I nad the same wordes seye
As ye han herd yet to alle you I praye — Blameth nouzt me for as in my sentence
Yet shall ye synde difference
For this sentence of this tretice lite — After which this mery tale I write.
And herkeneth what that I shall say
And late me telle my tale I pray

Here endith the tale of Maister Chaucer.

And here ye shal synde a moral tale of Melibe and Prudence

Ewrtyn man called Melibe.
Mirty and riche begat his wif that cal Xpon
led was Prudence a douzter which that
called was Sophie Upon a day befel that he
for his disport he went into the feldes
him to play his wif and eke his douzter
hath he left withyme his hous of

CANTERBURY TALES

By GEOFFREY CHAUCER

With an INTRODUCTION, NOTES *and a* GLOSSARY *by* JOHN MATTHEWS MANLY *of the* UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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To

EDITH RICKERT

PREFACE

This volume was planned many years ago as a small selection of the Canterbury Tales for use in senior high school and elementary college work. At first only the Prologue and the tales of the Prioress, the Nuns' Priest, the Pardoner, and the Franklin were included in the plan. Various obstacles, however, interfered with the immediate production of the volume, and meanwhile many of the leading teachers of Chaucer were emphasizing the study of the Tales as literature in their introductory courses and were favoring wide and rapid reading as the proper basis for this. As this practice had my complete sympathy, I was glad to extend the scope of my volume. But I fear — indeed, I am sure — that this and other changes of plan which need not now be specified have seriously interfered with uniformity of aims and standards in the editing of the present volume.

Some of the notes were originally written to meet the supposed needs of young pupils. Some of the later ones, presenting new material or supporting new interpretations were from the first of a more advanced character. I have tried to revise my MS into reasonable uniformity of aims and standards before sending it to press, but I am not satisfied with my success.

In the treatment of Chaucer's language I feel, also, that I have fallen between two stools. From the one side came requests for a fuller treatment of both forms and syntax than had been given by other editors of school texts; from the other side I had warnings not to overemphasize the grammar. When the work was in MS I felt that I had perhaps given too much detail; when I saw it in type, I was more impressed by its scrappiness and incompleteness.

Even while the volume has been going through the hands of the printer — in fact, in some instances, after it was in page proofs — new material and new interpretations have come to light for both Introduction and Notes of such importance as to demand insertion. Although this has added greatly to the

value of the volume for the interpretation of Chaucer's life and poetry, it has inevitably resulted in faults of form and proportion.

But I conceive that no intelligent teacher of literature wants a textbook of the old fashioned sort; that is, one designed to be "crammed up" by his pupils. Our object in teaching Chaucer is to introduce our pupils to one of the greatest of English poets, and aid them in understanding his poetry. Miss Spurgeon's recent volumes (*Five Centuries of Chaucer Criticism*) show that in every age he has been read and admired, not by literary faddists, but by merchants, doctors, lawyers, engineers, — by sensible men in general, and by every really great writer, with perhaps the sole exception of Byron. Two obstacles only have stood in the way of his being read by everybody; first, his language; second, ignorance of the customs, beliefs, and ideals of the age in which he lived.

But these obstacles are not very serious. The language difficulty rapidly vanishes. Anyone who has a good sense of rhythm can in a few hours of practice learn to read Chaucer very acceptably.

The unfamiliarity of the customs and ideas of Chaucer's world can of course best be diminished by extensive reading in his poetry and in the books from which he derived his education and so much of his delight, and by the works of art that are left to us from his period. Notes, if properly written and used, can help materially. They are, however, a sort of concentrated extract or essence of wide reading and are difficult of digestion if not taken discreetly. A note is useful and justifiable, I take it, only if it either furnishes a fact or an explanation not easily obtained or supplies some element that enables a passage to produce more nearly the effect intended by the author.

The Introduction and the Notes of this volume are intended primarily as aids to be consulted by the student who finds himself in need of information necessary for the complete understanding of Chaucer but not readily accessible. It is to be hoped that no one will regard them in any other light.

Although I believe the text of the Tales here printed to be nearer Chaucer's original than any that has been printed heretofore, it is in no sense an attempt at a critical text. I am now

engaged in the task of attempting to discover the relations of all the MSS and to form upon them a critical text, but it will require several years of labor to accomplish this. Meanwhile I have printed the text of the Ellesmere MS, departing from it only when a study of the other MSS seemed clearly to prove that it was in error. In every such case, I have adopted the reading of the other MSS of Class I, if it seemed at all a possible one. In this I differ from recent editors, who have often resorted to Harley 7334 — a MS that I agree with Tatlock in regarding as entirely unworthy of the high claims that have been made for it.

Contrary to the practice of most editors of Chaucer texts for college use, I have not given outlines or summaries of the sources and analogues of Chaucer's tales. Those who wish to see them will find references to them in the Notes. For my part, I should say that the mere knowledge that Chaucer got the materials for a certain tale from this source or that is useless lumber. The profit in studying the sources of a great writer is to learn what he has done with his material. Such study of course requires full and accurate texts of the sources; and there is obviously not space for them in a school text.

In the Introduction I have included no remarks on the nature of Chaucer's art or the charm of his poetry. His excellencies are on the one hand so simple that they need no interpreter or showman, and, on the other, so subtle that the prosaic middleman had better leave them unspoiled.

It remains to thank — if I could — all who have helped me. But this I cannot do, for my study of Chaucer has extended over forty years. In the earlier years I learned from my teachers; in the later I have learned most from my students — mainly from their refusing to believe some of the things I have tried to teach them. Since I began the actual work on the manuscript I have incurred obligations more easily specified. Years ago Miss Jessie M. Lyons prepared a glossary and marked the qualities of the vowels in every line of the tales I then intended to include in the volume. Although, in deference to a census of the opinions of Chaucer scholars in America, the plan of marking the vowels has been abandoned, and although the glossary has since been revised and extended, I am still grateful to Miss Lyons for her careful and scholarly work. To Vincent B. Redstone, Esq., of

Woodbridge, England, and Miss Lilian J. Redstone, of London, I am indebted for nearly all the new information about Chaucer's life, ancestry, and business and social relations, and for many passages in the Notes. Above all, I am indebted to Professor Edith Rickert, of the University of Chicago, for innumerable contributions to the Introduction, Notes, and Glossary, for reading both galley and page proofs of the whole volume, and for making the Index.

To the officials of the Public Record Office, the Guild Hall, the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the Cambridge University Library, I am grateful for many courtesies and for permission to reproduce documents from their great collections.

My discussion of the Order of the Tales in the MSS (pp. 77–86) is summarized from the unpublished doctoral dissertation of my pupil and friend Professor Robert Campbell. Mr. Campbell has introduced order and light into a field heretofore regarded as chaotic and dark. I am greatly indebted to him for permission to use the results of his brilliant study.

The text has been repunctuated from beginning to end. Where my punctuation differs from that of my predecessors it is because I either understand a passage differently or desire a different emphasis or shade of meaning.

I shall be grateful for corrections of the ancient errors which have escaped me or the new ones which I have committed.

J. M. M.

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ERRATA

p. vi, l. 39. *For* test *read* text

p. 11, l. 3. *For* some of *read* witnessed

p. 13, l. 3. *For* within six years of *read* a few years after

p. 25, l. 1. *After* me *place a semicolon*

p. 27, l. 1. *After* Abbey *insert a comma*

p. 33, ll. 9 and 10 *Read* in 1396, for he received a magnificent scarlet robe, trimmed with fur, costing 8*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*, from Henry of Derby, and on

p. 55, l. 22. *For* first earl and fourth duke *read* fourth earl and first duke

p. 78, l. 18. *For* as it is, with it would, *read* though it is, would

p. 78, l. 32. *For* 655 *read* 596

p. 79, l. 18. *Before* N P T *insert* Mo T, link,

p. 79, l. 21. *Before* Cl T *insert* Cl head-link

p. 79, l. 29. *After* Dd *and* Ad^{1} *insert commas*

p. 79, footnote. *For* 87 *read* 87f.

p. 80, l. 7. *For* B 1 *read* B^{1}

p. 82, l. 4. *For* Head-Link *read* End-Link

p. 82, l. 12. *Before* practice *insert* a

p. 82, l. 32. *For* Rw^{3} *read* Rw^{2}

p. 83, l. 26. *Enclose in parenthesis* Hg and Nl

p. 91, l. 15. For *v* read *o*

p. 94, l. 33. *Change the semicolon to a comma*

p. 95, l. 20. *After* I *insert a comma*

p. 98, l. 5 from bottom. *For* six *read* seven

p. 103, l. 3 from bottom. *For* lovedeste *read* lovedest

p. 104, l. 29. *For* Pres. *read* Pret.

p. 117, last line. *For* svnge *read* synge

p. 118, l. 15. *For* a Sarry *read* Sarray

p. 121, l. 16. *For* Religioun hath take up, etc. *read* And Arcite is exiled upon his heed I, 1344

p. 129, l. 15. *For* dect- *read* deca-

p. 129, l. 16. *For* metrisa *read* metrist

p. 131, l. 21. *For* chap. V *read* I, ch. V

p. 144, l. 11. *For* Well *read* Wells

p. 149, l. 16. *For* Caunturbury *read* Caunterbury

ERRATA

p. 153, l. 162.	*No indention*
p. 155, l. 241.	*After* tappestere *delete the comma*
p. 231, l. 3164.	*For* Or *read* Of
p. 232, l. 3217.	*Delete the quotation marks*
p. 497, l. 27.	*For* 1408 *read* 1804
p. 502, l. 11.	*For* 1369 *read* 1359
p. 504, l. 6 from bottom.	*For the reference in the parenthesis read* quoted in modernized text at p. 7 above
p. 526, l. 17.	*For* under their names in the Glossary *read* in Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*
p. 528, l. 27.	*For* Tres *read* Très
p. 533, l. 7 from bottom.	*For* Summone's *read* Summoner's
p. 535, l. 10.	*For* Summone *read* Summoner
p. 536, l. 20.	*After* III, 66 *insert second member of parenthesis*
p. 537, l. 20.	*For* earlier *read* early
p. 538, l. 9.	*For* even *read* ward
p. 538, l. 10.	*For* Earndon *read* Faringdon
p. 545, l. 6 from bottom.	*Before* 'hero' *insert first member of parenthesis*
p. 547, l. 25.	*For* stevy *read* stevyn
p. 550, l. 13 from bottom.	*After* Scholastica *insert a comma*
p. 571, l. 7.	*For* 81 *read* 80
p. 583, l. 13.	*Insert* of *before* Livia
p. 587, l. 25.	*For* þam *read* þǣm
p. 587, note on 1377.	*Substitute:* Twenty-seven manuscripts including Ha^4 read **Rood for**; Gg, Ps read **Wente for**; Gl, Nl, Ra^3, Tc^1 read **Redy for**; twenty-one manuscripts including El and Hg have simple **For** — all these omit **And** in l. 1379.
p. 588, l. 7 from bottom.	*For* carving *read* statue
p. 597, l. 4 from bottom.	*Transfer* situated on the Volga, *to precede* was *in the preceding line*
p. 600, l. 10.	*For* Story *read* Study
p. 604, l. 22.	*For* 436ff. *read* IX, 163ff.
p. 606, last line.	*For* EETS *read* Chaucer Soc.
p. 607, l. 6.	*Delete the* ~~brave~~ *in* Hauley
p. 608, l. 1.	*For* inventihn *read* invention

463 !

macron !

ERRATA

p. 610, l. 17. *For* star, near *read* star was near

p. 620, l. 1. *For* Jornandes *read* Jordanes

p. 623, after last line. *Add*

The most careful and elaborate study of the physical and moral characteristics of the Pardoner is that by Curry, *op. cit.*, ch. III, 'The Pardoner's Secret.'

p. 629, l. 10. For *Libius Disconius* read *Libeaus Desconus*

p. 629, l. 2 from bottom. *After* Sir Thopas *insert a comma*

p. 632, l. 7 from bottom. *For* syde smale *read* sydes smale

p. 634, l. 2 from bottom. *For* EETS *read* Chaucer Soc.

p. 649, ll. 8, 5 from bottom. *Delete the breves*

p. 650, l. 3. *For* This the *read* This is the

p. 650, l. 9. For *alembricum* read *alembicum* and insert comma

p. 650, l. 19. *For* John *read* William

p. 651, l. 12 from bottom. *After* of *insert a comma*

p. 651, l. 9 from bottom. *For* thirteenth-century *read* twelfth-century

p. 654, l. 8. *For* of the day *read* of the second day

p. 662, *s. v.* baite. *The* æ *in* bætan *should be long*

p. 663, *s. v.* blende. *The* e *in* blendan *should be short*

p. 664, *s. v.* breyde. *For* W I *read* S III *and at the end add* (in Chaucer W I)

p. 666, *s. v.* chirche-reve. *The* i *in* circe *should be short*

p. 667, col. 2, l. 1. *For* theorems *read* exercises

p. 668, *s. v.* crepen. *The* eo *in* creopan *should be long*

p. 669, *s. v.* dere. *For* W II *read* W I

p. 673, *s. v.* fer. *For* feor *read* feorr

p. 674, *s. v.* fordo. *For* fordon *read* fordōn

p. 674, *s. v.* forthy. *For* forðy *read* for ðȳ

p. 674, *s. v.* frankeleyn. *For* ranchilanus *read* franchilanus

p. 677, *s. v.* harye. *For* W II *read* W I

p. 677, *s. v.* hawe. *For* see note on II 95 *read* baked haws

p. 678, *s. v.* herbe-yve. *The parenthesis should be closed after* uncertain, *not after* coronopus

ERRATA

p. 678, *s. v.* herte-spoon.	*The* o *in* spon *should be long*
p. 679, *s. v.* howpe.	*For* W I *read* S VII
p. 680, *s. v.* kerve.	*For* S II *read* S III
p. 682, *s. v.* lere.	*The* æ *in* læran *should be long*
p. 682, *s. v.* lesyng.	*The* ea *in* leasung *should be long*
p. 683, *s. v.* losien.	*For* W I *read* W II
p. 683, *s. v.* loute.	*For* S III *read* S II
p. 691, *s. v.* queern.	*After* cweorn *insert*, f.
p. 695, *s. v.* shal.	*For* pp. *read* See § 91
p. 695, *s. v.* sheete.	*For* W II *read* S II
p. 695, *s. v.* shirreve.	*For* seīr *read* scīr
p. 695, *s. v.* shryve.	*For* W I *read* S I
p. 696, *s. v.* smerte.	*For* S II *read* S III
p. 696, *s. v.* sooth.	*For* sōd *read* sōþ
p. 696, *s. v.* soothfast-nesse.	*The* o *in the Old English word should be long*
p. 697, *s. v.* sowke.	*For* W I *read* S II
p. 697, *s. v.* sterve.	*For* S II *read* S III
p. 698, *s. v.* stirte.	*After* styrtan *insert* W I)
p. 698, *s. v.* stroute.	*For* W I *read* W II
p. 700, *s. v.* tembrace.	*For* tenbr ace *read* tenbrace
p. 700, *s. v.* theen.	*For* S II *read* S I
p. 701, *s. v.* thretyng.	*The* ea *in* þreatian *should be long*
p. 701, *s. v.* to-broken.	*For* W II *read* S IV
p. 706, *s. v.* wreke.	*For* W V *read* S V
p. 706, *s. v.* writhyng.	*For* W I *read* S I
p. 706, *s. v.* wroong.	*For* S I *read* S III
p. 711, l. 24.	*For* Goeffrey *read* Geoffrey

ILLUSTRATIONS

Facing page

1. PAGE FROM THE BODLEIAN MS, RAWLINSON POETRY 223 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

   In the upper part of the page is a corrupt text of VII 2125–2156 — the conversation between the Host and Chaucer — written by mistake in the Thopas stanza-form. The figure in the initial was probably intended to represent Chaucer, the teller of the tale of *Melibeus*, but as a portrait it has no authority.

2. A MAY PARTY 192

   From the *Très Riches Heures* of Jehan duc de Berri, now at Chantilly. The MS was illuminated mainly by the Limbourg brothers, before 1416.

3. THE WIFE OF BATH 278

   From MS Cambridge Gg. 4.27. One of four pictures of the pilgrims left by the vandals who cut out the rest.

4. THREE SCENES FROM THE GRISELDA STORY 332

   From a cassone, or dower chest, painted by Fr. Pesellino. Now in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Italy. At the left are shown the Marquis and his train leaving the palace. Near the fountain in the center the Marquis sees Griselda, with her water jar. At the extreme right the ladies have stripped Griselda of her old clothing and are about to clothe her in the wedding garments provided by Walter.

5. A FARMYARD AND COTTAGE INTERIOR 444

   From the *Très Riches Heures* of Jehan duc de Berri.

6. THE OLD ROAD TO CANTERBURY 494

   Based mainly on maps of the Ordnance Survey.

7. GEOMANTIC FIGURES 552

   From MS Bodley 581, a treatise written for King Richard II in March 1391.

CHAUCER'S
CANTERBURY TALES

I

CHAUCER'S LIFE

His Ancestry

Geoffrey Chaucer was descended from a family which during the latter part of the thirteenth century lived at Ipswich. In those days family names among the middle classes were not yet fixed, but might vary as a man changed his occupation or his place of residence or as his neighbors named him from some personal peculiarity. At first Chaucer's ancestors were commonly known under the names of Malyn, or de Dynyngton (Dennington). Some branches of the family continued to be called Malyn, but by the beginning of the fourteenth century the branch from which the poet was descended was settling upon the name Chaucer. This name is derived from a trade, the making of *chausses*, or hose, but we have no record that any of the poet's kinsmen actually followed this trade.

The earliest known members of the family in Ipswich were taverners, who apparently also engaged in the wine and wool trades. Ipswich, about ten miles from the sea, at the head of the estuary of the river Orwell, was in the fourteenth century a great trading port, doing business especially with the Low Countries. Its principal exports were wool, sheepskins, and undressed cloths; its imports were wines, general merchandise (mercery), and finished cloths. Ipswich merchants were therefore likely to export wool and to import wine on the same ships, and accordingly to become both woolmongers and vintners. Moreover, as the income of the government was largely derived from export duties on wool and import duties on wines and merchandise, there were good business positions in the various ports for responsible men as officers of the king's customs. Hence we find members of the Chaucer family for more than a century associated with the wine and wool business and with the customs. Besides the regular duty on wines,

the king was entitled to a certain part of each shipload of wine imported. The duty of collecting this — called butlerage — belonged to the king's butler, who commonly exercised the office through attorneys or deputies. More than one of Chaucer's kinsmen were appointed deputies of the king's butler.

Toward the end of the thirteenth century the family began to establish itself in London. Robert le Chaucer, the poet's grandfather, was in turn deputy to the king's butler for the port of London and collector of a special duty on wines levied on the vintners of Aquitaine. He seems to have been a prosperous man; his widow, Mary le Chaucer (*née* de Westhale), in 1315 owned property in and near London to the value of more than 70 *l.* (about $10,000 today).

Chaucer's relatives, the Staces, belonged to the same social and occupational class. At the time when Robert le Chaucer was an official in London, Thomas Stace was deputy to the king's butler in Ipswich, and later held this office for two years or more for all the seaports between Ipswich and the mouth of the Thames. His son Thomas, between 1331 and 1339 at least, held the offices of controller of the wool custom and of the wine custom for the ports between Yarmouth and Ipswich. Both the elder Thomas and his son Geoffrey — for whom some suppose the poet was named — were repeatedly members of parliament, and when Geoffrey Stace had to borrow 250 *l.* to pay a fine, he was able to raise this sum on the security of his lands.

In short, all that we know of the early Chaucers and the families into which they married indicates that they were prosperous members of the upper middle class — merchants and government officials.

Chaucer's grandmother, Mary le Chaucer, had two husbands besides Robert le Chaucer. The first was John Heyroun, a Londoner, apparently in the wine trade, who by a previous marriage with a Somersetshire woman had acquired land in Somerset and established relations there which may have had interesting consequences for the poet. The third husband was Richard Chaucer, probably Robert's first cousin. Richard, who died in 1349 (apparently of the first great plague), was a

London vintner of considerable wealth, who in 1341–42 was deputy to the king's butler in London. His wealth is indicated by the fact that in 1346, when a financier named Walter de Chiriton was forming a syndicate to lend money to the king, Richard Chaucer furnished 500 *l.* (about $75,000 today).

The earliest record of John Chaucer, the poet's father, is decidedly picturesque. In 1324, when he was less than twelve years old, he was kidnaped by two of the Staces and his own aunt, Agnes de Westhale, a widow to whose daughter Joan they intended to marry him, undoubtedly for the sake of his property. The result of the long lawsuit occasioned by this abduction was that Geoffrey Stace, who meanwhile had married Agnes de Westhale, was obliged to pay the fine of 250 *l.* referred to above.

John Chaucer became a wealthy vintner and, like his father and stepfather and cousins, was connected with the customs. Between 1347 and 1349 he was deputy to the king's butler in Southampton and four other ports on the south coast, and also collector of the wool customs in the same ports.[1]

At some unknown date John Chaucer was married to a widow named Agnes de Northwell, with at least one child. What was her maiden name we do not know, but she was the niece and heiress of Hamo de Copton,[2] "moneyer" (official in the mint), and inherited from him two valuable tenements just outside the city walls at Aldgate.

The first husband of Agnes seems to have been a kinsman of William de Northwell, sometime keeper of the wardrobe for the king and later for the Prince of Wales, and for a short time baron of the exchequer. The special interest of this connection in the interpretation of Chaucer's life is that Northwell's

[1] As these customs were assigned to Queen Philippa, it may be that John Chaucer was regarded as in her service. On July 16, 1349, a man named John Chausey was paid a noble (6 *s.* 8 *d.*, about $50) for taking to her at the palace of Devizes a black palfrey from the Bishop of Salisbury; but it is not certain that this was John Chaucer.

[2] The name Copton is so rare today that some scholars have thought it an error for Compton. It seems, however, to come from a manor called Copton near Faversham, and there are enough records to show that the spelling is correct.

official relations with the royal family may have led to Geoffrey Chaucer's service as page in the household of Prince Lionel [1] — or rather perhaps in that of his wife, Elizabeth, countess of Ulster — and as esquire in the king's household. Furthermore, since as baron of the exchequer Northwell must have had some legal training, he may have had some influence upon the education of the future poet.

Birth and Early Education

When or where the poet was born we do not know. On October 15, 1386, when he was called as witness in a lawsuit about a coat of arms (the famous Scrope-Grosvenor case) he was recorded as then "forty years of age and more (*et plus*) and "to have borne arms for twenty-seven years." On the basis of this, 1340 has commonly been given as approximately the date of his birth, although taken literally it would point to about 1345. The use of the legal formula *et plus* has been studied in the hope that it would help to determine the date more accurately, but thus far the results have been negative. It is true that in the Scrope-Grosvenor Roll, which records more than two hundred depositions, the ages of the greater number of witnesses were recorded in round numbers or in numbers ending with five. Apparently also many witnesses either did not know or did not give their exact ages. Used with forty, the formula *et plus* might mean between forty and fifty, but it is used even with such numbers as thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-six, fifty-four, and twenty-nine and a half. Originally it was doubtless intended to cover the time between the last birthday and the date of record, but by this time it was often used as a mere meaningless tag. The point to be remembered is that there is no more evidence for 1340 than for any date between that and 1345, and that some circumstances in Chaucer's career point to the date of his birth as nearer 1345 than 1340.

[1] Another — recently discovered — connection of the Chaucers with the court is that Cristina, wife of William de Blakeshale, of Ipswich, was in the queen's service as nurse, probably of Prince Lionel (*nutrix domine Regine Anglie*, Ipswich Records 1338–39, l[3] g. to. 1).

The poet may have been born in London in his father's Thames Street house by the Walbrook, on which in 1381 he gave a quitclaim to Henry Herbury; but as John Chaucer owned much other property, this is not certain.

Among the tenements owned by Chaucer's parents one item, apparently inherited by Agnes Chaucer from her uncle, included twenty-four shops and two gardens, and another consisted of ten and a half acres. Both were on the main street just outside the city wall and must therefore have been of considerable value. And there is evidence that John Chaucer himself owned, besides the Thames Street house, land both in London and in Ipswich. Another house which may have been the poet's birthplace was one in the Vintry which his father rented from the abbess and convent of Cheshunt for 3 *l.* a year, a fairly high rent. This house seems to have remained in the family for some time, for on October 25, 1367, the lease was made over to Bartholomew atte Chapel, who in the preceding year had married the poet's widowed mother.

Where Chaucer went to school is uncertain. There were in his time in London three elementary schools, all within a short walk from the Thames Street house or from any house in the Vintry. The nearest was the school of the Arches, in the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow (Bow Church); very little farther was the school, later so famous, connected with St. Paul's Cathedral; and only a few minutes beyond this was the school of the Chapel Royal, at St. Martin's-le-Grand. At each of these schools there was apparently both a grammar school, under the grammar school master, generally required to be an M.A., and a more elementary music school under the song school master—much like the school described in the 'Prioress's Tale.' It is perhaps worth noting that it was during Chaucer's childhood that John Cornwall, master of the Merton College School at Oxford, introduced his great reform of substituting English for French as the language of instruction; but the reform may not have affected the schooling of Chaucer. John de Trevisa, in his additions to Higden's *Polychronicon*, says: "This custom (of translating Latin into French) was much used before the first plague, and has since been somewhat changed; for John Cornwaile, master of grammar, changed the

teaching in grammar school and the translation of French into English; and Richard Pencriche learned this sort of teaching from him, and other men from Pencriche, so that now, the year of Our Lord 1385 and of the second King Richard after the Conquest nine, in all the grammar schools of England, children give up French and construe and learn in English, and have thereby advantage on one side and disadvantage on another side; their advantage is that they learn their grammar in less time than children were accustomed to do; the disadvantage is that now children in grammar school know no more French than does their left heel; and that is harm for them if they shall pass the sea and travel in strange lands and in many other places. Also gentlemen have now in general ceased to teach their children French."

Page and Prisoner of War, 1357–60

The first certain record of the poet's life shows him in 1357 in the service of the Countess Elizabeth of Ulster, wife of Prince Lionel, second son of the king. This record is a fragment of an account book, in which we read that in April 1357 the Countess bought for Geoffrey Chaucer a cloak for 4 *s.*, a pair of red and black [breeches?] and a pair of shoes for 3 *s.* (about $50 altogether). These new clothes were apparently to be worn at the annual feast of the Knights of the Garter, commonly held at Windsor on St. George's Day (April 23). The following May, Chaucer had a present of 2 *s.* from the Countess, then in London; and the next Christmas he was with her at the royal hunting lodge of Hatfield (Yorkshire), where he received 2 *s.* 6 *d.* "for necessaries." From these items we learn that Chaucer was brought up in a courtly environment. That he was only a page is indicated by the relatively small sum paid for his clothes and the small sums given to him, compared with those for other members of the household. These sums also suit better the hypothesis that he was then a boy of twelve or thirteen than that which makes him a youth of seventeen.

These accounts indicate also that at Hatfield during Christmas 1357 Chaucer had an opportunity to see John of Gaunt,

with whom he later had so much to do, for John of Gaunt was visiting there at that time. The Lady Blanche of Lancaster, who two years later married John of Gaunt, may also have been invited there for Christmas, for on December 20 the Countess paid a servant of the Duke of Lancaster 2 *s.* for bringing a letter from the Lady Blanche.

If, as seems probable, Chaucer was with the Countess during the period covered by the fragmentary account, he must have seen the splendid Garter feast of 1358 for which the king gave Queen Philippa the huge sum of 500 *l.*, to buy clothes. He may have been with the Countess when, in 1356, she visited her aunt, Elizabeth of Hainaut, at the convent of Stratford-at-Bow, where later the Prioress of his Prologue learned her French; he may have been with her when she visited the Dowager Queen Isabella and the Queen of Scotland, who was still with her at Hertford in 1358; he was perhaps present at the betrothal of the Countess's little daughter Philippa to Edmund Mortimer, third earl of March, whose son was later to appoint Chaucer his deputy as forester of North Petherton; and on May 19, 1359, he may have attended the wedding of John of Gaunt to Blanche of Lancaster, about whose death he wrote his first long poem.

In 1359–60 we find Chaucer with the English army invading France. The campaign, which began October 28, 1359, when King Edward with his four sons set sail for France, was planned as a sort of gigantic picnic. If Chaucer watched the disembarkation at Calais, he would have seen from six to eight thousand carts, each drawn by four horses, loaded with tents, mills for grinding wheat, ovens, forges, small leather boats to go fishing in, and all sorts of food and luxuries. There were no less than forty falconers with their hawks, thirty couples of hunting dogs, and as many for coursing, provided for the royal family, and most of the noblemen brought hawks and hounds. The baggage train is said to have been six miles long on the narrow road, where five hundred men had to go in advance to cut away the thorns and bushes.

But from the first it rained dismally. Along the sodden roads the small army with its great burden of baggage travelled often less than ten miles a day. The king and his nobles feasted

on the good things they had brought with them; but the common soldiers almost starved, for the French had fled to the castles with their provisions.

As the army advanced through northern France, there were no battles but there were continual skirmishes between small parties of French and English, some of them very picturesque. In the neighborhood of Rheims, the king and the princes settled for a time and rode about foraging and pillaging as they could. In one such foray, on the town of Réthel, near Rheims, Chaucer was taken prisoner. He was ransomed about March 1, 1360, the king contributing 16 *l.* (about $2,400) toward his ransom. Whether this was the full amount paid there is nothing to show.

Dr. Furnivall commented on the fact that the king paid 13 *s.* 4 *d.* more to replace a horse that had been killed than for the ransom of the poet. But the horse was an unusually expensive one; and why should the king pay more for Chaucer than the enemy demanded? Moreover, Chaucer's ransom was by no means among the least. For Sir Richard de Stury, an esquire of the royal household, the king paid 50 *l.* or three times as much as for Chaucer; for valets of the queen and of the countess of Ulster 10 *l.* each; for a chaplain 8 *l.;* for carters and common soldiers 1 *l.* 10 *s.* to 2 *l.* each. From these sums, it seems likely that Chaucer was recognized as of good enough position to warrant a fair ransom, but too young to warrant a high one.[1]

After his ransom, when the English army was camped near Chartres, Chaucer probably saw the beautiful towers of that

[1] One of the principal reasons advanced for 1340 as Chaucer's date of birth was that he could hardly have gone to the war before he was nineteen. A study of the ages of the deponents in the Scrope-Grosvenor Roll, and of their ages when they took arms, showed that more than a third of those whose ages could be determined took arms when they were under sixteen; and also, that in time of war, the ages of taking arms became noticeably lower. From the municipal records of London, it appears that in time of war all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty were liable to military service; and poll taxes were imposed upon all persons above fifteen. In the home town of Chaucer's father — Ipswich — boys came of age at twelve. All these points considered, the argument that Chaucer could not have gone into the army under nineteen fails and is replaced by the probability that he might have gone at the age of sixteen, or even earlier.

cathedral as he had earlier seen those of the cathedral of Rheims. No doubt he also saw the walls and spires of Paris and witnessed the deeds of arms about the gates; and he was probably in the great thunderstorm which frightened Edward into signing with the French the treaty of Brétigny.

In October 1360, when the king and Prince Lionel returned to Calais in connection with the terms of the peace, Chaucer was apparently in the prince's service, for he carried letters from the prince to England at that time.

Law Student, Valet, and Esquire, 1360–70

Between October 1360 and June 1367, there is a gap in the records of Chaucer's life. There is no evidence that he went to Ireland with Prince Lionel in 1361 — his name is not in the very full list of persons who went.

The wording of the first document we have concerning Chaucer's position as yeoman in the king's household (June 20, 1367) does not necessarily imply that he had been long in the king's service, but rather that he was then first appointed. It is possible that in 1361 he changed from the household of Lionel to that of his brother, John of Gaunt, and there continued until 1367; but the only evidence of such a change is in *The Boke of the Duchesse*, which shows that the poet was familiar with the appearance and character of the Duchess and suggests that he had a strong devotion to her. Such evidence, of course, cannot be relied upon to prove that he was a member of the household.

But even if we assume that from 1361 to 1367 Chaucer was a member of some royal household, there is reason to believe that he continued his education. His works show that he was for his age a very learned man. He read with ease French and Italian as well as Latin; he knew something of history, theology, medicine, and law; he understood alchemy well enough to use the technical terms with astonishing correctness; and he knew astrology and astronomy well. Moreover, if we may take literally his own statement in *The Legende of Good Women* (A 273), he owned sixty books, a library greater than those of some of the colleges in the universities. Is it likely that he would have

acquired this learning and taste for books with only an elementary education and amid the social distractions of the court? In the sixteenth century it was said that he had studied at both Oxford and Cambridge, but this statement is as yet unsupported. But Thomas Speght, who edited Chaucer in 1598, asserted that Chaucer had studied law at the Inner Temple, "for that, manye yeres since, master Buckley did see a recorde in the same howse, where Geffrye Chaucer was fined two shillinges for beatinge a Franciscane Fryer in fletestreate."

This assertion has long been discredited on the ground that it rested on the sole testimony of a person about whom nothing was known. But as it has been shown recently that the Master Buckley referred to was undoubtedly the keeper of the records of the Inner Temple in Speght's time, it now appears that the assertion was made by the one man in England who was likely to have seen such a record if it existed. Although the Inner Temple records of earlier date than the sixteenth century have now perished, there is no reason to doubt that such a record as this survived until Speght's time; and a study of the Black Books of Lincoln's Inn, which go back to 1422, shows that fines for similar offenses were common there, that the facts as given are entirely credible, and that the practices and customs of Lincoln's Inn and of the Temple were very similar and did not vary perceptibly in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is, accordingly, no reason to doubt that Master Buckley had seen the record and that he spoke the truth about it. If he had been inventing an item for the use of an admiring Chaucer editor, he would surely not have invented one that — as the critic Francis Thynne immediately pointed out — was in apparent contradiction to what were then believed to be the facts concerning Chaucer's birth and the history of the Temple.

In support of the external evidence is Chaucer's introduction among the Canterbury Pilgrims of the official called the Manciple, who would hardly have been thought of by one unfamiliar with life at the inns of court.

Moreover, the known facts of Chaucer's official career seem to imply some familiarity with business methods and with at least the more untechnical aspects of the law. There is, of

course, no reason whatever to suppose that Chaucer ever practiced law; but on the authority of Chief Justice Fortescue, who was a student at Lincoln's Inn a few years after Chaucer's death, it may be said that the inns of court existed not merely for the training of lawyers, but for the training of gentlemen's sons for business and for diplomatic and other official careers; and on Chaucer's own authority ('Prologue,' 567 ff.) we know that the lawyers of the Temple were fitted to be business managers of great estates. It must be remembered that in the fourteenth century, when wealth consisted so largely of real property, a general understanding of law was far more essential to any ambitious man than it is today. Altogether, then, it seems probable that Chaucer got at least a part of his education in the law school known as the Temple.

It should be noted, moreover, that Chaucer's connection with the court would not have interfered with his studying at the Temple. Only half the king's attendants were on duty at a time; and even for those on duty, special arrangements were made so that they could study in the inns of court.

There is a picturesque description in the *Household Book of Edward IV* (based upon that of Edward III), which shows how the king's squires in attendance spent their time at court:

> These Esquires of household of old be accustomed, winter and summer, in afternoons and evenings, to draw to Lords' chambers within court, there to keep honest company according to their skill, in talking of chronicles of kings, and of other policies, or in piping, or harping, singing, or martial acts [such as tilting, sword play], to help occupy (i.e., amuse) the court, and [to] accompany strangers (i.e., to entertain them) till the time require of departing.

Although Chaucer was appointed as yeoman, or groom, we find his name in the list of esquires in 1368. From this and another list we learn that the squires received each year a summer and a winter "robe" [1] to the value of 20 *s.* each. This was about three times as much as was paid for the clothes that he had from the countess of Ulster and suggests the difference in his age and position.

[1] A "robe" was not a gown but a livery of several pieces: a tunic, two longer coats, and a hood, often furred.

Among the "damoiselles" in attendance on the queen is Philippa Chaucer, evidently at that time the poet's wife, who had received her appointment a year earlier than he did. She is commonly believed to have been the daughter of Sir Paon de Roet, of Hainaut, who came to England with Queen Philippa when she married Edward III. If so, she was the sister of Katherine de Roet, who, after being the mistress of John of Gaunt for twenty years or more, was married to him and became duchess of Lancaster in 1396.

In 1369 Chaucer was in the army of John of Gaunt on a raid in Picardy. The little troop of 600 men-at-arms and 1500 archers, including Chaucer and about 150 other members of the king's household, landed at Calais in July. Although the French were seven to one the stronger, they did not attack. The two armies faced each other from August 25 until September 12; then in the night the French built a long line of camp fires to cover their retreat and slipped away. The English army pillaged its way back to Calais and returned home.

That summer there was another pestilence. On August 15, Queen Philippa died of it, and on September 12 — the very day the duke's enemies left the field to him — his dearly beloved Duchess Blanche. Froissart, who had lived at the English court, in one of his poems mourns "the good lady . . . who was queen of England" and "her daughter of Lancaster . . . who died young and pretty, about twenty-two years old, gay, mirthful, fresh, cheery, sweet, simple, of gentle manner, the good lady called Blanche." In prose he praises the two women even more earnestly.

Both Geoffrey and Philippa Chaucer were among the mourners at the funeral of Queen Philippa and undoubtedly at that of the Duchess Blanche; and Chaucer's first long original poem, *The Boke of the Duchesse*, must have been written soon after this date.

Foreign Missions, 1370–78

Evidence has been produced above to show that Chaucer had received as a student in the Inner Temple a training in law and in the methods of business, well adapted to prepare

him for such occupations as he later engaged in. In 1370 he entered upon a diplomatic career, and during the following eight years was a member of seven or eight commissions to the continent. Of the first we know only that it took him abroad during the summer of 1370.[1]

The second was concerned with important business which kept him in Italy during the winter and spring of 1373. As a part of this business he was sent to Genoa with two other men, Jacopo de Provano and Giovanni de Mari, to discuss with the duke and his council and the citizens of Genoa the establishment of a trading port in England for Genoese merchants and the "franchises, liberties, immunities, and privileges" to be associated with such a port. Giovanni de Mari was a Genoese citizen. Jacopo de Provano was also an Italian — apparently a native of the little town of Carignano, about fifteen miles south of Turin — who had for two or three years acted as business agent for the English king. As, however, Chaucer was the only Englishman on the commission, it seems natural to suppose that he was especially charged with looking to the preservation of English rights and conformity to English laws and customs. In the course of these negotiations Chaucer was obliged to secure a loan of 33 *l.* from Jacopo de Provano, 7 *l.* 10 *s.* of which he spent in sending messengers to the king. Apparently these negotiations were unsuccessful, for the Genoese did not get their port. On the same trip Chaucer went also to Florence. The length of his stay there and the

[1] Since this was written Mr. V. B. Redstone has found in the Chancery Warrants at the Public Record Office a bill of privy seal (811/918) concerning an earlier journey abroad: "Soient faitz briefs desouz notre graunt seal pour notre ame vallet Geffrey Chaucer de passer en port de Douorr' ovesqz deux hakeneys vint solds por ses despenses et dis liures en eschange. Donne souz notre prive seal a Wyndesore le xvii jour de Juyl Lan quarante second [1368]." For what purpose and to what destination the poet went abroad does not yet appear, nor whether he went as a royal messenger or at his own expense. The 20 *s.* would pay for his passage of the channel at Dover; the 10 *l.* in foreign money for traveling expenses may give a clue to the length of his journey; the two hackneys (for one traveler) suggest that he was traveling in haste. It will be remembered that Prince Lionel was married at Milan on May 29. So, although Chaucer did not accompany him, as has sometimes been asserted, he may nevertheless have arrived there in time to meet Petrarch. But this record must await further investigation.

purpose of his visit are unknown, but it has been conjectured that he was charged with the private negotiation of a loan for the king.

It is commonly held that this visit to Florence marked the beginning of Chaucer's knowledge of the Italian language and acquaintance with Italian literature. This may be true, but it should be borne in mind that there were many Italians in London at this time, that a number of them lived in Chaucer's immediate neighborhood, and that the connections of Chaucer's family with the mint, where many Italians were employed in responsible positions, would have furnished an easy means of his obtaining some knowledge of both the language and the literature of Italy before he made his journey. It is indeed possible that one reason for choosing him as a member of this commission may have been that he had some knowledge of Italian. It seems also worth suggesting that the home of Jacopo de Provano was not more than twenty miles from Saluzzo, the scene of the 'Clerk's Tale.'

In 1376–77 Chaucer was again employed three or four times in important negotiations. The first time he was sent with Sir John de Burley (brother of Prince Richard's tutor) on "secret business," we do not know where. The second time he was sent to Flanders with Sir Thomas Percy (brother of the first earl of Northumberland, uncle of "Hotspur," himself an admiral and a naval hero and later seneschal of Richard's household). In the same spring he was twice sent on missions to France — to Paris and to Montreuil, apparently — first, to treat of peace and, secondly, to arrange a marriage between Prince Richard and a daughter of the king of France. It is not certain on which of the other commissions sent to France at about the same time he was employed; Froissart names as his associates on the first Sir Guichard d'Angle (Richard's military tutor) and Sir Richard Stury (later the negotiator of Richard's marriage); and on the second, the Earl of Salisbury, Sir Guichard d'Angle, the Bishop of Hereford, and the Bishop of St. David's, the chancellor of England. In documents of the time other distinguished men are named as having served on these commissions. Negotiations were cut short by the death of King Edward III on June 21. Later in the summer,

the Earl of Salisbury and Sir Guichard d'Angle were again sent abroad about the young king's marriage; and there is reason to believe that Chaucer was with them then also. The hostile feeling between the two countries was evidently too great for terms to be arranged, and the negotiations were fruitless.

Chaucer's last mission took him to Italy during the summer of 1378. He was sent with Sir Edward de Berkeley to Barnabo de Visconti, duke of Milan, and to Sir John Hawkwood, an Englishman in the duke's service and his military leader, to try to secure the assistance of the Milanese in the English wars with France. But evidently the mission failed.

Controller of Customs, 1374–86

We have nothing to show whether or not Chaucer was a skilful diplomat. The fact that he was appointed several times indicates that he was. But as early as 1374, he seems to have settled upon a business career for a livelihood. He was then appointed controller of the customs on wool, hides, and sheepskins, in the port of London, at an annual salary of 10 *l.* (about $1500). In this, he was returning to the kind of occupation previously followed by his ancestors. His duty was primarily to keep a counter-roll, or check-roll, of the customs accounts, to verify the roll of the two collectors. He was supposed to remain in person at the Wool Quay and to write the roll with his own hand. According to a recently discovered record, however, he was allowed to appoint a deputy as early as 1377. His associates, the collectors, were all very wealthy men, magnates of the city, aldermen, nearly all of them earlier or later honored by election as lord mayor. Sir William Walworth, with whom he was associated in 1375, and Sir Nicholas Brembre and Sir John Philipot, with whom he worked ten and seven years respectively, were merchant princes and important historic figures.

Until December 1386 — for twelve years — Chaucer was employed in checking up the wool customs, the great source of revenue for the English kings. In 1376 he apparently did a good piece of detective work, for he was given as a reward 71 *l.* 4 *s.* 6 *d.*, stated to have been the price of wool which a

man had tried to smuggle abroad to Holland. Both the collectors and their controller received regularly, in addition to their salaries, an annual reward for their diligence in collecting the customs.

In consequence, perhaps, of Chaucer's services in the wool custom, he was, in 1382, appointed controller also of the petty custom on wines and other merchandise (a much less important office) with leave to have a permanent deputy. What income this office brought him is unknown. Undoubtedly there were more perquisites attached to both offices than are recorded, and his income from the two offices was apparently very considerable.

During his absences on diplomatic missions Chaucer had, of course, to employ a deputy in his office in the wool customs. In 1383 also he asked leave to appoint a deputy for four months as he was "like to be so much occupied upon particular business that for a certain time he may not without grievous disturbance attend to that office." This was allowed, and in November 1384 he again got permission to appoint a deputy, this time for a month. In February 1385 he petitioned for leave to have a permanent deputy in his office. This petition was granted; evidently with the approval of the king's favorite, the Earl of Oxford, "through whom (as Froissart said) every thing was done," for he wrote on the parchment in French: "The King has granted it" (*Le roy lad grante*) and his signature: *Oxen.*

While Chaucer was on leave in 1383 a new custom house was built on the Wool Quay. After that time we must imagine the poet as making up his rolls in an upstairs apartment (probably), divided into two rooms and a garret, in a building thirty-eight feet long and twenty-one and a half feet wide.

In December 1386 Chaucer's employment at the custom house ceased. The common view of scholars is that he was dismissed by the commission appointed by parliament to inquire into the conduct of the king's business. It is true that this commission, appointed under the influence of the Duke of Gloucester, was strongly opposed to the king and his appointees, but several facts seem to indicate that Chaucer's official career was not terminated by its action. In the first place, one of his

successors was a man who had previously served as his deputy. In the second place, the collectors, who were strong partisans of the king, remained in office for some time after the replacement of Chaucer. In the third place, Chaucer had some months before given up possession of his house over Aldgate, and on October 5, only four days after the assembly of parliament, and before the committee of investigation could have been appointed, the house had been leased to "Richard Forster," who was perhaps the Richard Forester whom Chaucer had appointed as one of his legal representatives during his mission of 1378. Moreover, in 1385 Chaucer had been appointed justice of the peace for Kent, and in the summer of 1386 had been elected a member of that parliament which is supposed to have taken the action which relieved him of his posts in the customs. On the whole, it would seem more probable that Chaucer had already decided to give up his official positions and retire to Kent. It is possible that the health of his wife, who apparently died in 1387, may have been a motive in this decision. All this, however, is merely speculation.

Relations with the Court and Personal Life, 1374–86

Throughout his business and diplomatic career Chaucer continued to be officially a squire of the king's household and his salary as such was paid with fair regularity except in the confusion following the death of the old king. His wife continued with Queen Philippa until the queen's death, and shortly after John of Gaunt brought his second wife, Constance of Castile, to England, she was appointed one of the duchess's attendants. In 1374 John of Gaunt made Geoffrey Chaucer a grant of 10 *l.* a year for the service he had rendered to him and for the service his wife, Philippa, had rendered both to Queen Philippa and to Constance of Castile. Although as regards Philippa this is clear, we do not know when Chaucer himself was in the duke's service except during the Picardy campaign, and as very few of the records of payment of this annuity have been published, we do not know how regularly it was paid

On St. George's Day (April 23), 1374, when King Edward was holding the Garter feast at Windsor, he made Chaucer a

curious grant of a pitcher of wine to be taken daily at the hands of the king's butler in the port of London. As practically no business was done on that day (the few other grants seeming to have been of a personal character), one may wonder whether Chaucer may not have presented to the king a poem which had led to this personal form of grant. Grants of a tun of wine were common; grants of a pitcher of wine a day were excessively rare. That the grant was valuable is shown by the fact that, later on, Chaucer was able to commute it for 20 marks a year, the amount of his annuity as squire (about $2,000).

In May 1374 the Chaucers, Geoffrey and Philippa, left court and set up housekeeping in the "mansion" over Aldgate, which the poet obtained rent-free from the municipality, on condition that he keep it in repair and that the city retain right of entry for purposes of defense in time of war. The house seems to have had one large room, with a window looking inward over the city and one looking outward across the moor, a smaller room, and two quite small rooms, in addition to cellars. Earlier in the century, and perhaps at this time, there was a garden south of the house.

In this house, then, only a few minutes' walk from the custom house, Chaucer lived for about twelve years. But the housekeeping must have been much interrupted by his own journeys abroad, which occupied a considerable part of 1377 and 1378, by his wife's continued absence in 1379, and by his own absences in 1383, 1384, and perhaps in 1385.

During these years he obtained two valuable grants of a sort commonly distributed among the king's personal attendants. These were the wardships and marriages which, by the English system of feudal tenure, were continually falling into the king's hands. In 1375 Chaucer obtained two such wardships: one of the son of John de Solys, which could not have been very profitable, and the other of Edmund de Staplegate, the heir of a rich merchant of Canterbury, which brought him 104 *l.* (about $15,000).

A Coram Rege roll, just discovered (KB 27 No. 475), shows that at Michaelmas term 3 Richard II [1379] Chaucer put in his stead a professional attorney, Stephen del Falle in a plea of contempt and trespass brought against him by one Thomas

Stondon on behalf of the king and himself. The nature of the offence charged is not yet known.

That Chaucer in 1378 was regarded as a man of substantial means seems indicated by his acceptance with John de Beverley, another squire, as mainpernor for Sir William de Beauchamp in his guardianship of the lands of the Earl of Pembroke in Wales and elsewhere. Sir William de Beauchamp, brother of the Earl of Warwick, was responsible to the king for a sum of 400 *l.* a year (about $60,000). Mainpernors, as a rule, were responsible for the sums guaranteed, and as John de Beverley, one of the king's favorite squires, and an exceedingly wealthy man, died in 1381 and was not, so far as we know, replaced, it would seem that Chaucer was regarded as sufficient guarantee. Confirmation of his financial responsibility is furnished by another record that has just been discovered in the Coram Rege Rolls. At the Hilary term 4 Richard II [1381] he, Ralph Strode, and two others became sureties for John Hende in 100 *l.* each.

In 1380 Chaucer was involved in a case of "raptus" (abduction; cf. the experience of his father), with two London citizens, John Grove, armorer, and Richard Goodchild, cutler. Although the circumstances are obscure, the records show that Chaucer was cleared of responsibility, first by the woman abducted (Cecilia Chaumpaigne), and then by the men, one of whom paid her ten pounds and was evidently the person principally concerned. The particular interest of the case lies in the fact that the men who witnessed for Chaucer the deed exonerating him were three knights of the king's household — Sir William de Beauchamp (for whom he had stood mainpernor in 1378), Sir William Neville, and Sir John Clanvowe — together with his associate in the customs, John Philipot, and a rich neighbor at Aldgate, Richard Morel. These names are evidence of Chaucer's standing at that time.

That Chaucer was in London during the Peasant Revolt of 1381 is indicated by the fact that during this very time he quitclaimed his father's house in Thames Street to Henry Herbury (one of the collectors of the poll tax that had brought about the revolt); but whether he was involved in it is unknown. Two of his custom house associates, Brembre and Walworth (then

mayor of London and the slayer of Wat Tyler) were knighted by the young king on the historic occasion of the dispersing of the rioters at Mile End Green.

Throughout this period of Chaucer's life — 1374–1386 — his wife seems to have enjoyed special favor in the household of Constance of Castile, where Katherine Swynford was governess of two of the young princesses. As early as 1373 the duke had given Philippa Chaucer for a new year's gift six silver-gilt buttons and a buttoner (for the countless buttons which it was then the fashion to wear); and in 1380, 1381, and 1382 he gave her three silver-gilt cups with covers, each of greater value than the preceding.

Another indication of Chaucer's position at this time is the grant to him of black cloth for the funeral of Princess Joan, widow of the Black Prince, in 1385.

The last important event of the years Chaucer spent at the custom house and at Aldgate concerns his wife. On February 19, 1386, she was admitted to the fraternity of Lincoln Cathedral. This honor, which entitled the recipient to the special prayers of the cathedral body, was at the same time granted to Henry, earl of Derby (later Henry IV), to John Beaufort (son of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford), to Sir Thomas Swynford (her son by her first husband), and to five knights and squires who seem to have been members of the duke's household. Philippa Chaucer was the only woman admitted. John of Gaunt was present, but there is no mention of Chaucer.

Chaucer and Deschamps, 1386

It was apparently in the early part of 1386 that there occurred an event to which we owe our first specific reference to Geoffrey Chaucer as a poet. This event was the return of Sir Lewis Clifford from France, bearing with him as a tribute to Chaucer a ballade addressed to him by Eustache Deschamps, the leading French poet of the day, together with other poems, perhaps his most recent compositions. Among the latter apparently was the *Lai de Franchise*, which Chaucer gracefully imitated in some lines of the Prologue to *The Legende of Good Women*. More significantly still, in the ballade the French poet

humbly submits his work to the judgment of his English confrere, whose merits he exalts in many flattering comparisons, and whom he especially celebrates as translator of the famous *Roman de la Rose*. The interest and importance of this ballade will appear more fully the more carefully it is studied. There is some reason to believe that the two poets may have met in the spring of 1377 when Chaucer visited Paris as a member of an embassy for the negotiation of peace. The seventh line of the second stanza implies that Chaucer had sent a message to Deschamps:

O Socrates plains de philosophie,
Seneque en meurs, et Auglux en pratique,
Ovides grans en ta poëterie,
Briés en parler, saiges en rethorique,
Aigles treshaulz, qui par ta theorique
Enlumines le regne d'Eneas,
L'isle aux geans (ceuls de Bruth), et qu'i as
Semé les fleurs et planté le rosier
Aux ignorans de la langue Pandras —
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

Tu es d'amours mondains dieux en Albie;
Et *de la Rose*, en la terre Angelique —
Qui, d'Angela saxonne est puis flourie
Angleterre, d'elle ce nom s'applique
Le derrenier en l'ethimologique —
En bon Anglès le *Livre* translatas;
Et un vergier, où du plant demandas
De ceuls qui font pour eulx auctorisier,
A ja long temps que tu edifias,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

A toy pour ce de la fontaine Helye
Requier avoir un buvraige autentique,
Dont la doys est du tout en ta baillie,
Pour rafrener d'elle ma soif ethique,
Qui en Gaule seray paralitique
Jusques a ce que tu m'abuveras.
Eustaces sui, qui de mon plant aras;
Mais pran en gré les euvres d'escolier
Que par Clifford de moy avoir pourras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

L'Envoy

Poëte hault, loënge d'escuîrie,
En ton jardin ne seroie qu'ortie,
Considéré ce que j'ay dit premier —
Ton noble plant, ta douce melodie;
Mais, pour sçavoir, de rescripre te prie,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.[1]

Translation

O Socrates full of wisdom,
Seneca in morals, and Aulus Gellius in practical affairs,
Ovid great in thy poetics,
Concise in speech, experienced in rhetoric,
Lofty eagle, who by thy science
Dost illumine the kingdom of Æneas,
The isle of giants (those of Brutus), and who there hast
Sown the flowers and planted the rose-tree
Amongst those ignorant of the Grecian tongue —
O great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer;

Thou art a mundane god of love in Albion;
And *of the Rose* in the Angelic land —
Which from Lady Angela the Saxon has since become
England, for from her this name is taken
As final in the etymology —
Into good English *The Book* thou hast translated;
And a garden, for which thou hast asked plants
From those who poetize to win them fame,
Now for a long time thou hast been constructing,
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

Of thee therefore from the Helian spring
I ask to have an authentic draught,
For the stream is entirely in thy keeping,
To assuage therewith my feverish thirst,
Who in Gaul shall be as one paralyzed
Until thou shalt make me drink.

[1] The text is based mainly upon the facsimile given by Miss Spurgeon, *Chaucer Criticism and Allusion*, App. B, 16, but in both text and translation I have made much use of the important article of Jenkins, *MLN*, XXXIII, 266–77.

An Eustache am I, and thou shalt have a plant from me;
But treat with favor the writings of a novice
Which by Clifford thou shalt receive from me,
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

L'Envoy

Excellent poet, glory of squiredom,
In thy garden I should be but a nettle,
In comparison with what I have just spoken of —
Thy noble plant, thy sweet melody;
But, for my information, I beg thee for an official verdict,
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

This poem is not only of interest in showing the high esteem in which Chaucer was held by the leading contemporary poet in France, but incidentally is of value for Chaucer's biography in two other respects. Aulus Gellius, who is mentioned under the name "Auglus" in l. 2, enjoyed a high reputation in the Middle Ages, "a double reputation, in fact," says Professor Jenkins, "for he was eminent both in letters and in the world of affairs as a judge. Even juris consults have drawn upon Gellius in matters of law. . . . Chaucer, in Deschamps' mind, is eminent not only in letters but also 'in practice,' as one may speak in these days of the practice of a lawyer or of a physician." The reference therefore seems to support the other evidence that Chaucer had received a legal education and was known for his skill in practical affairs. The other important reference is to Chaucer's translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. The terms in which Deschamps speaks of this translation and the fact that it is specifically the occasion of his ballade seem to indicate either that it was a recent performance or that it had only recently come to the attention of Deschamps. That the translation had only recently been made when Deschamps wrote is also suggested by the fact that in the Prologue to *The Legende of Good Women* it is coupled with the *Troilus and Criseyde* — undoubtedly a recent composition — as constituting the poet's offense against the god of love. It would hardly seem appropriate to bring up in this connection one of the sins of the poet's youth. Although one's first impulse is to think

of a translation as belonging to the period of a poet's apprenticeship, it is not necessary to assign all a poet's translations to his youth. Certainly Chaucer at or near this very time was engaged with translations and paraphrases — the 'Palamon and Arcite,' the 'Tale of Griselda,' the *Boethius*, the *Troilus and Criseyde*, perhaps also the 'Melibeus'; even later with translations from Origen and Pope Innocent.

Between 1370, then, and 1387 Chaucer had had eight years much broken into by long journeys abroad and eight years of routine at the custom house. His income from various sources after 1374 must have averaged a sum equivalent to between $10,000 and $15,000 a year, besides a house rent-free and many special perquisites. Fully occupied as he was with business, he yet found time to write a number of long poems and translations.

Country Gentleman, 1386–89

On October 5, 1386, Chaucer had evidently given up his Aldgate home — how long before we do not know — as it was then granted to someone else. On December 4 and 14 other men were appointed to fill his places in the customs. The next facts we know about him show that he was in the country.

It may be that Chaucer went to the country to live as soon as he had secured permission for a permanent deputy at the Wool Quay. At all events, as has already been said, he was appointed justice of the peace for Kent, October 12, 1385, and named in a commission to the justices of Kent, with Sir Simon de Burley, warden of the Cinque Ports and keeper of Dover Castle, and with many eminent jurists and representatives of county families, June 28, 1386. That he owed this office to his ownership of land in Kent seems almost certain. The commissions of the peace were made up of local landowners and a few "expert in the law." Whether he acquired land by purchase or by inheritance is unknown. There is some reason, however, to believe that he lived in the neighborhood of Greenwich, only a few miles from London. In August 1386 he was elected as one of the two members of parliament for the county of Kent.

During the 1386 session of parliament there began at West-

minster, in the refectory of the Abbey, the court of chivalry in which Chaucer gave testimony that a certain coat of arms belonged to the Scrope family, of Yorkshire, and not, so far as he knew, to the Grosvenors, of Cheshire. In his deposition he tells of having seen Sir Henry and Sir Richard Scrope bearing these arms at Réthel until he was captured there, and he gives a vivid little picture of himself talking later in London to another man about these arms (with his words restored to direct discourse):

> Once, on Friday Street, in London, as I was going along the street, I saw a new sign hanging out, made with these arms, and I asked what inn it was that had hung out these arms of Scrope. And somebody answered me and said: "No, sir, they are not hung out as the arms of Scrope, or painted there for those arms; but they are painted and put there for a knight of Cheshire who is called Sir Robert Grosvenor." And that was the first time I ever heard tell of Sir Robert Grosvenor or of his ancestors or of any other bearing the name of Grosvenor.

It is from the record of his testimony in this court that we derive our most definite information in regard to the date of the poet's birth. The statement that he was then forty years old and upward has already been discussed (above p. 6).

Chaucer's parliamentary experience was limited to the two months of October and November, during which the session of 1386 lasted. It may be that he was prevented from reëlection by the coming into power of the king's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, in the autumn of 1386. The Duke of Lancaster had just gone to Spain, the Duke of York took no interest in politics, and Richard was so completely in the hands of his favorites that Gloucester created a party to get rid of them. Prominent among these favorites were the earl of Oxford, the archbishop of York (brother of Sir William Neville who stood by Chaucer in 1380), Chief Justice Tresilian (named with Chaucer on the Kentish commission of the peace in 1386), Sir Simon Burley (also on this commission, and brother to Sir John Burley with whom Chaucer had been associated on a mission in 1376), and Sir Nicholas Brembre (Chaucer's associate for many years in the customs). As to Chaucer's rela-

tions with Gloucester we know nothing; but it is a fact that on May 1, 1388, after the Gloucester party had succeeded in executing Tresilian, Burley, and Brembre, and both Oxford and the Archbishop had fled into exile, Chaucer resigned his annuity of forty marks to one John Scalby. It may be, as has been supposed, that this was merely a business transaction to convert his income into ready money for some special purpose or need.

The only other known records of Chaucer during the Gloucester régime are three recently discovered writs concerning a claim against him of 66 *s.* 8 *d.* (five marks) by John Churchman, who succeeded John Organ as collector of customs in the port of London. Concerning the nature of the claim or its validity we have as yet no information. It is possible that these writs had something to do with closing up Chaucer's accounts as controller — if he kept any; but more probably the poet had been a partner in some commercial transaction. It is significant, at any rate, that the second and third writs are addressed to the sheriff of Kent. Clearly it was believed that Chaucer was living in that county.

During this period from 1386 to 1389 Chaucer wrote his Prologue to *The Legende of Good Women* and began to put the stories together. The spring of 1387 is commonly mentioned as the date when he definitely began to work out his plan for the *Canterbury Tales* as a group, though some of the tales themselves were written earlier and some later. There is no evidence that he actually made the pilgrimage, at this or any other time. It is generally assumed that Philippa Chaucer, his wife, died in 1387, as the last payment of her annuity was made on June 18 of that year. Since it was a very common practice to make vows at the shrine of St. Thomas on behalf of persons who were ill, it is of course possible that the Canterbury pilgrimage reflects a real pilgrimage made by the poet in 1387 on behalf of his wife, but this is a mere speculation and there is no evidence for it. It is equally possible that the poet himself may have been in ill health for some time at this period; and again it is equally possible that there was no definite pilgrimage which suggested the *Canterbury Tales*.

Clerk of the King's Works, 1389–91

Immediately after Richard recovered his power in 1389, Chaucer was appointed to the important office of clerk of the king's works in various royal residences. By an appointment dating from July 12, 1389, Chaucer had charge of the Tower, Westminster Palace, and eight other royal residences, besides St. George's Chapel, Windsor — for special repairs in which he was given another commission exactly a year later — five hunting lodges, and the mews for falcons at Charing Cross, as well as of all gardens, ponds, mills, and fences belonging to any of these. He had power to impress workmen, to bring back runaway workmen, to arrest and imprison those who resisted him, to purvey all materials needed for his work and to make inquisition where such materials could be procured. He had four or more deputy purveyors and a controller — to check his rolls as he had checked the rolls of the collectors of the customs — he had a small army of men in his pay as workmen; and he was paymaster to at least one man of high reputation as an architect — Henry Yevele, who before Chaucer's death restored Westminster Hall and left it essentially as it is today, and who also erected the beautiful tombs of King Richard and Queen Anne still in Westminster Abbey.

The importance of Chaucer's post is shown by the fact that it was held earlier by William of Wykeham, later the famous bishop of Winchester, who is believed to have been a skilled architect and to have had a hand in the designing of the beautiful buildings he put up when he founded New College, Oxford (completed about 1386). It is not less than extraordinary that such a post should have been given to a poet.

During Chaucer's term of office occurred two events of unusual interest. In May 1390 and again about Michaelmas it was his business to construct scaffolds (seats for tournaments at Smithfield. Of the second of these tournaments and the feasting and dancing that accompanied it Froissart has given a brilliant picture. Immediately after it, the Order of the Garter was conferred at Windsor — in St. George's Chapel, recently repaired by Chaucer — upon William of Bavaria, earl

of Ostervant (earlier a suitor of Queen Anne and of Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt).

On March 12, 1390, Chaucer had been appointed upon a commission for the prosaic but important purpose of looking after the walls, ditches, sewers, and bridges, along the Thames between Greenwich and Woolwich. The chief point of interest here lies in his associates: Sir Richard Stury — captured with him in France in 1359, and sent on a mission with him in 1377 — two eminent lawyers, John Wadham and William Skrene; a wealthy London vintner, Henry Vanner; and John Culpepper, a Kentish country gentleman.

In September 1390 Chaucer suffered a series of misfortunes, concerning which there has been much discussion. According to the records he was assaulted and robbed three times within four days, once "near the Fowle Oak," in Kent, once at Westminster, in Middlesex, and once at Hatcham, in Surrey. The first robbery is known only from a writ to the exchequer, dated January 6, 1391, releasing Geoffrey Chaucer from repayment of 20 *l.* of the king's money, of which, together with his horse and other property, he had been feloniously robbed on the "third day of September last past by certain notable robbers, as has been fully confessed by the mouth of one of them." For the other two robberies there are several documents, connected with the arrest and trial of the robbers on the testimony of one Richard Brerelay, who confessed and turned king's evidence. These documents state that on Tuesday, September 6, Chaucer was robbed twice — at Westminster of 10 *l.* and at Hatcham of 9 *l.* 44 (or 43) *d.* Some scholars have held that there were only two robberies with a total loss of 20 *l.* in money. This is possible only if the king's writ of January 6, 1391, is in error as to the date. The "Fowle Oak" seems to have been a place for public hangings, on the highroad between Greenwich and London, and had been the scene of several robberies. Although in Kent, it was not far from Hatcham in Surrey. As Chaucer is said to have been beaten and wounded as well as robbed in the Hatcham attack, these experiences may have been a motive for giving up the clerkship of the king's works.

It has been suggested that Chaucer had another motive for giving up the clerkship of the works in the unsatisfactory

financial conditions connected with the post. It is pointed out that when he rendered his account, on June 17, 1391, there was a balance due him of about 21 *l.*, which was not fully paid for more than a year. But during his twenty-three months in the clerkship Chaucer had paid out 1231 *l.* 6 *s.* 3½ *d.* and had received 1210 *l.* 7 *s.* 1 *d.* The balance due, though large in itself, was small in comparison with the sums handled and the tardiness in repayment was not greater than was customary in dealings with the government. That Chaucer was in comfortable financial condition at this time is indicated by the fact that on April 6, 1391 he advanced for the works 100 marks (66 *l.* 13 *s.* 4 *d.*), which was not repaid until May 22, 1392.

The Last Decade, 1391–1400

But it is quite possible that Chaucer's motive for giving up the clerkship of the works was merely that the duties of the office required a very large amount of travel and absence from home, which may have been distasteful to a man of sedentary habits and which quite certainly would have given him no leisure or opportunity for writing. In any event it seems probable that Chaucer was not forced out of the clerkship as has usually been said, for he did not give up this position until June 17, 1391. He was appointed deputy forester of the royal forest of North Petherton, Somerset, at some date in 1391 previous to June 22, probably before June 17 when he turned over the clerkship of the works to his successor.[1]

On January 18, 1391, Chaucer was distrained to appear and settle his account as clerk of the king's works from July 12, 1389. It is recorded that on the appointed day he appeared *in propria persona sua* and settled his accounts.

Chaucer's appointment as deputy forester was made first by Roger Mortimer, earl of March (grandson of the Countess of Ulster in whose household he began his career); later, in 1398 by the Countess of March (probably a renewal of office upon

[1] At first, in 14th Richard II — June 22, 1390– June 21, 1391 — he is named with one Richard Brittle; later, in 21st Richard II, alone. Whether he and Brittle shared the office, or whether he completed a year in which Brittle had died, cannot now be determined.

her husband's death or during his absence in Ireland). It is, to say the least, possible, that Chaucer owed this particular office, not to his early connection with the Countess of Ulster, but to the ownership of certain lands in the forest by some of his cousins (descendants of Mary Chaucer by her first husband, John Heyroun), which carried with them a claim to the appointment of forester. However that may have been, for the last decade of his life, Chaucer, so far as we know, held no office that tied him to London; and as the foresters usually resided in the Park House in the forest, it may be that he spent much of his time there. His duty was to keep a general oversight of the other forest officers.

King Richard's interest in Chaucer seems not to have ceased when he gave up the clerkship of the works, for in the Issue Roll of the exchequer there is recorded a gift of 10 *l.* on January 9, 1393, as a reward for "good service rendered to the king during the year now present." What this service was we have no means of knowing.

In the recently discovered account book of Gilbert Maghfeld (or Maufeld), a London merchant who lent money to many members of the court circle, Chaucer is recorded as having borrowed 26 *s.* 8 *d.* (2 marks) on Sunday, July 28, 1392. As this loan was to be repaid on the following Saturday and is cancelled as paid, it hardly justifies any inference concerning the general condition of Chaucer's finances. There was little money in circulation in the fourteenth century, and even persons of considerable wealth were often obliged to borrow small sums when they needed cash.

On February 28, 1394, the king granted him a new annuity of 20 *l.* for services past and future. From the frequency with which Chaucer obtained advances on this annuity it has been inferred that during the last years of his life he was poor. It is true that he obtained advances or loans as many as a dozen times, but against this must be set the fact that the payments from the exchequer were almost as often in arrears. It therefore seems equally probable that because of the large expenditures which the exchequer had to meet from time to time for Richard's expedition to Ireland and other demands, Chaucer took advantage of his knowledge of the situation and his re-

lations with officials of the exchequer to obtain payments whenever money was available even if his pension was not yet due. If we can assume that the poet was the Geoffrey Chaucer who was subforester of North Petherton and that his home was now principally in Somerset, the irregularities of the payments on his pension may be due in some measure at least to the infrequency of his visits to London.

He was apparently in London at Christmas 1395 and early in 1396, for he received a magnificent scarlet robe, trimmed with fur, costing 8 *l.* 8 *s.* 4 *d.*, from Henry of Derby, and on February 1 he seems to have delivered 10 *l.* from the clerk of the wardrobe to the young earl of Derby, later Henry IV. He was still or again in London on March 1, when he repaid to the exchequer a loan of two marks made during the preceding year. On April 1, as he with several others was appointed by one Gregory Ballard attorney to take seisin for him of certain lands at and near Greenwich, it is clear that he was then either at London, or more probably at Greenwich. But there is no further sign of him in London until December 25, 1396, when he again drew on account at the exchequer. That he should have wished to be in London for the festivities attending the arrival of the little queen, Isabel of France, at which his own sister-in-law, the newly married duchess of Lancaster, was the second greatest lady of the land, is, of course, highly probable.

In 1397, he collected money in London, on July 2 and August 9, and was paid in full, up to date, on October 26; but there is no evidence that he was in London aside from those three dates.

In 1398, he seems to have been in a very peculiar position. On April 24, Isabella, widow of Walter Bukholt, sued him for a debt of more than fourteen pounds and on May 4, he was given letters of protection for two years on the ground that he has been appointed by the king "to attend to many difficult and pressing matters, both at court and away from court, within the realm of England," and he is afraid of being hindered in this business by plaints or suits of "certain jealous persons" (*emulos*). Although the meaning of this is still uncertain, it seems probable that the suit which immediately preceded the letters of protection grew out of Chaucer's business as clerk of

the works. The likelihood of this is increased by the recent discovery by Miss Rickert that Bukholt, alias Worthe, was keeper of the king's manor of Clarendon, at the time when Chaucer had general oversight of the works there; and that later, Bukholt himself was called clerk of the works at that place. Out of this situation may have grown some dispute as to financial responsibility.

During these proceedings Chaucer, after being paid half his annuity, went to the Exchequer three times within a month to get an advance of a noble (6 *s.* 8 *d.*); and on the day of the last advance, received also the substantial sum of 5 *l.* 6 *s.* 8 *d.* Moreover, at the very time when it was ordered that he should be outlawed unless he appeared to answer the Bukholt plea, he petitioned for and received from the king the annual grant of a butt of wine, and was advanced ten pounds on his annuity. However this strange combination of facts is to be explained, it shows at least that Chaucer was still employed in important affairs and enjoyed the confidence and favor of the king, and that his credit was good at the Exchequer. Whether his temporary embarrassment was due to his admission of the debt and settlement out of court or to some other cause, it is impossible to say. Whether at this time he was living in London or not is doubtful. The report of the sheriff of Middlesex that he was not to be found is capable of more than one interpretation.

The last thing we hear of him under Richard II is that, in the spring and summer of 1399, his annuity was paid in full. And the first thing we hear under the reign of Henry IV is that the new king on the very day of his coronation (October 13) gave him "for service rendered and to be rendered" an annuity of forty marks a year besides the twenty pounds granted by King Richard. When a few days later he pleaded that he had lost his patent for the twenty pounds and also for the butt of wine granted by King Richard, Henry IV renewed both patents. Evidently with anticipation of prosperity to come, the following Christmas Eve Chaucer leased a house within the garden of Westminster Abbey. He took over, it would seem, the unexpired part of a long lease, as the arrangement was for fifty-three years at an annual rent of 53 *s.* 4 *d.*

He was to make all repairs and was not permitted to sublet. This entering upon a long lease of a house in a quiet place strongly suggests that he was then hoping to settle down to the completion of his *Canterbury Tales*, begun so many years before.

With the aid of some recently discovered records it is possible to give a fuller account than has hitherto been given of the house in the Abbey precincts in which Chaucer spent the last months of his life. It seems clear from the description in leases to other tenants that the house was adjacent to the chapel and probably lay on the south side, but separated from the Abbey mill stream by the great gate and very near to two gardens, one of which is distinguished by the term 'great.' The tenant immediately preceding Chaucer was John Edryk, usher of the exchequer, who had it in 1397–99. The next tenant after Chaucer was not his son Thomas as has usually been supposed. He is not known to have leased it until 1411. Chaucer's immediate successor in the lease seems to have been Master Paul (apparently the king's physician, Master Paul De Monte, a Florentine), who at Michaelmas, 1400, had a lease of the tenement and garden next the chapel for 60 *s.* The records show that rent was paid for the house in 1402–03, 1403–04, 1405–06, 1406–07, and 1407–08. In 1403–04 William Horscroft, a London skinner who had some sort of connection with the royal household, is recorded as paying 4 *l.* for the second year of a seven-year lease. The next known payments are those by Thomas Chaucer in 1411–12 and 1413–14.

In 1400 he received on February 21 the 10 *l.* due at Michaelmas 1399, the last payment of his pension under Richard II, and on June 5 he received a payment of 5 *l.* on the 8 *l.* 13 *s.* 5 *d.* due from October 21, 1399, when his pension was confirmed by Henry IV to March 31, 1400.

The accepted date of his death, October 25, 1400, is taken from his tomb in Westminster Abbey, which was not, however, erected until 1556. It probably represents an ancient tradition, which there is no serious reason for questioning.

Chaucer's Descendants

There is some evidence to show that Chaucer had several children, but it is not very satisfactory. The Elizabeth Chaucy for whom John of Gaunt paid a large sum in 1381 that she might be admitted as a nun in the aristocratic abbey of Barking, where Margaret Swynford already was established, may have been one daughter; the Agnes Chaucer who with Joan Swynford was one of the "damsels" in waiting at the coronation of Henry IV, may have been another. The "Litell Lowis, my sone," ten years old in 1391, for whom Chaucer compiled his treatise on the *Astrolabe*, appears to have been really his own son, and not, as has been plausibly argued, the son of Sir Lewis Clifford. At least, a newly discovered retinue roll shows Thomas Chaucer and Lewis Chaucer together at Carmarthen in 1403. The name *Lewis* may mean that Sir Lewis Clifford was godfather to Chaucer's son.

As to the relationship to the poet of Sir Thomas Chaucer, an extremely wealthy man who died in 1434, there has been much argument. That he was a near kinsman is certain from the fact that Henry Beaufort, son of Katherine Swynford and the Duke of Lancaster, twice refers to him as his "cousin Chaucer." Like other Chaucers, he was connected with the customs, being king's butler. He had annuities from both Richard and Henry, and, like Geoffrey Chaucer, received favors immediately after the coming of Henry IV to the throne. It appears that he was in the service of John of Gaunt at least as early as 1394–95, and continued in the service of his son. The evidence that he was Geoffrey's son rests particularly upon the definite statement of Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, who must often have seen Thomas Chaucer and have been familiar with contemporary opinion as to his parentage; upon Thomas Chaucer's use of a seal bearing the coat of arms elsewhere associated with Geoffrey and the name *Ghofrai Chaucier;* and upon his appointment as Geoffrey's successor as forester of North Petherton. His payment of the rent of the Westminster house between 1411 and his death, often used as an argument for the relationship, has no value as evidence of that fact.

If, as the evidence seems to indicate, Thomas Chaucer was the poet's son, we are able to trace the later history of the family with considerable definiteness. Thomas himself had a distinguished career as chief butler to the king, ambassador, speaker of the house of commons, member of the king's council, and was one of the wealthiest and most influential Englishmen of his day. His daughter Alice was married to the famous earl of Salisbury who was killed in the French wars fighting against Joan of Arc, and later to William de la Pole, who became duke of Suffolk and who brought about the marriage between Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. Their son, John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, married the sister of Edward IV. From Chaucer's sister-in-law, Katherine Swynford, and John of Gaunt were descended all of the English kings after Henry VI; Edward IV, Edward V, and Richard III being descended from Joan Beaufort, their daughter, and Henry VII from John Beaufort, their eldest son.

A letter by Alice Chaucer about her books indicates that she inherited to some degree the tastes of her grandfather the poet, though no copy of any of his works is definitely recorded. The famous Fairfax manuscript containing most of the minor poems was, however, made for her husband's friend and associate Sir Thomas Stanley, and may have been copied from a manuscript owned by her.

II

CHAUCER'S APPEARANCE

That Chaucer was about five feet six inches in height was estimated when his bones were accidentally uncovered in digging the grave for Robert Browning in Westminster Abbey. That his legs were unduly short in proportion to his body, as has sometimes been inferred from the picture in the Ellesmere manuscript, was not supported by this examination. That he was fond of good cheer and in his later years somewhat portly not only appears from his portraits but is definitely stated in more than one passage by the poet himself. The portraits, most of which are clearly derived from the same original, show

a fair-haired, ruddy-faced man with strong features and pointed beard. One of the most interesting of these portraits is that now preserved in the Library of Harvard University and formerly known as the Seddon portrait. The date 1400 under the coat of arms can hardly have been placed there in that year, as the form of the figure 4 belongs to the fifteenth century. But Holman Hunt felt confident that the portrait was painted from life. The face is not that of an old man, but distinctly suggests suffering and bad health.

Mr. Walter Rye in a private letter declares that this portrait cannot have been painted until many years after Chaucer's death. He bases his statement upon the declaration of an unnamed expert who asserts that portraits with coats of arms are not known to have been painted before the sixteenth century. I am not competent to estimate the value of this opinion.

The portrait is painted in oil colors on a thick oak board, on the back of which are pasted two pieces of paper. The upper one is so faded that not even a trace of writing appears upon it. The lower one, however, is marked "Copy of the above inscription" and states that on the sixth of September, 1803, the portrait was given by Miss Frances Lambert to Alexander Dyke, Esq., as a perpetual memorial of her relative and friend, Thomas Stokes, Esq., of Llanshawe's Court, Gloucestershire, where it had been preserved for more than three hundred years, as was attested by documents in the family archives. There is no place in Gloucestershire known as Llanshawe's Court. The copyist had evidently misread the name Stanshawe's Court, a manor long in the possession of the Stokes family, a few miles northwest of Bristol. In earlier times Stokeses were connected with Chaucer and his descendants in so many ways that there is no difficulty in supposing that the portrait came into the possession of the family at a very early period. I have not yet succeeded in learning whether the family records of which Miss Lambert speaks are still preserved. To Americans this portrait has an added interest as having been presented to the Harvard Library by Professor Charles Eliot Norton as a memorial of the two great scholars and lovers of Chaucer, Francis James Child and James Russell Lowell. Professor Norton had received it as a gift from James Loeb, Esq.

The portrait generally regarded as the most authoritative is that inserted by the order of Thomas Hoccleve in his *De Regimine Principum*. Three MSS of this poem contain copies of the portrait, the best of them being that in MS Harley 4866. The well-known picture in the famous Ellesmere MS is perhaps equally authoritative. Recently Brusendorff has argued in favor of the high claims of the picture, representing a poet reading his poems to an assembly, which forms the frontispiece of MS No. 61 of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. In it, he thinks, are given authentic portraits of the poet, King Richard, Queen Anne, and John of Gaunt. Although Brusendorff's arguments are not very substantial, his view may be correct. No one seems to have called attention to the curious miniature in the initial "A" of the Tale of Melibeus in MS Rawlinson Poetry 223. Seated beside a reading desk bearing an open book is a man who is evidently telling a story. But the man is tall and thin and resembles no other picture of Chaucer.

III

CHAUCER'S FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

The richness of Chaucer's life experience may be partly accounted for by his continued social contact with people of the most varied types and positions in England and by his frequent travels on the Continent and intercourse there with men of different ranks and different nations.

Brought up in royal households, he must have known well Prince Lionel and Prince John of Gaunt and their wives, Elizabeth of Ulster and the Duchess Blanche, of whose death he wrote. With King Edward's court he must have been especially familiar. What he did not know from his own experience as yeoman and esquire of the king's household, he may well have learned from his wife, a countrywoman and attendant of Queen Philippa. Undoubtedly he also saw much of the Black Prince and his beautiful wife, the "Fair Maid of Kent," to whose circle several of his friends were later attached. King Richard he must have known from early childhood to the end

of his wretched career. When John of Gaunt brought home his Spanish wife in 1372, Philippa Chaucer was very soon appointed her personal attendant; and there is strong evidence to show that Katherine Roet, first the governess of the duke's children, then his mistress, and finally, in 1396, his third wife and duchess of Lancaster, was Chaucer's sister-in-law. In the F version of *The Legende of Good Women* there is clear evidence that he knew and admired Queen Anne. Toward the end of Richard's reign there are indications that Chaucer, like many others, gave him up as hopeless and attached himself to the fortunes of Henry of Derby, who, on the very day of his coronation, richly rewarded the poet's service.

Among Chaucer's occasional poems, one — *Lak of Stedfastnesse* — is openly dedicated to King Richard and one — *The Compleynt to his Empty Purse* — to Henry IV; one — *The Compleynt of Venus* — is addressed to an unknown princess, perhaps the duchess of York; one — *Fortune* — is addressed to several unknown princes, probably the dukes of York and Gloucester, and Henry, earl of Derby; and one — *Rosamounde* — is apparently addressed to some little princess (the little Queen Isabel?).

Among members of the different royal households, Chaucer had, naturally, a wide acquaintance. Particularly significant are his relationships with the following: Sir Lewis Clifford and his son-in-law, Sir Philip la Vache; Sir William Beauchamp; Sir William Neville; Henry Scogan, esquire; and Sir John Clanvowe. The Bukton to whom he addresses one poem was probably Sir Peter Bukton, a distinguished lawyer and public official, though a claim has been made that he was Sir Robert Bukton, a squire in the service of Queen Anne, and there was also a John Bukton, whose claims have not yet been examined.

Sir Lewis Clifford, a younger son of the great baronial family of that name, was a distinguished soldier and a devoted adherent of the Princess of Wales. His relations with Chaucer have already been discussed. Clifford's son-in-law, Vache, of a Gascon family, was also a soldier and in close attendance upon the Princess of Wales, who made him one of her executors; he was later chamberlain to the little Queen Isabel. To him Chaucer dedicated his ballad, "Truth."

Sir William de Beauchamp, brother of the Earl of Warwick, cousin of the earls of Pembroke and of the Mortimers, was a sailor rather than soldier. He was captain of the town of Calais for many years and was among those especially intimate with King Richard. His relations with Chaucer have been discussed on p. 21. It seems probable that Chaucer owed not a little of his material in various ways to his association with him.

Sir William Neville, kinsman of both Clifford and Beauchamp, was also among Richard's intimates, and like Clifford, a member of the king's council. His brother John, Lord Neville of Raby, was a distinguished soldier, and another brother, the infamous Archbishop of York, was among Richard's advisers banished in 1388. Sir William Neville, however, continued in the king's service until his death. With Beauchamp, he stood by Chaucer in the Chaumpaigne case.

Sir John Clanvowe, also a distinguished soldier and diplomat, and a member of the council, was the third member of the king's household who supported Chaucer in the Chaumpaigne case. With Sir William Neville he undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1390; and they both died near Constantinople. His kinsman, Sir Thomas Clanvowe, also of the court circle, later wrote *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* in palpable imitation of Chaucer.

The Scogan, to whom Chaucer addressed one of his ballades, was evidently in court favor at the time when it was written. Apparently he was the Henry Scogan who later became the tutor of the four sons of Henry IV. In a poem addressed to these young princes, about 1407, Scogan refers to Chaucer as his master, and quotes entire Chaucer's *Gentilesse*.

Of these men, Clifford, Neville, and Clanvowe, seem to have been for a time devoted followers of Wyclif, as was also Sir Richard Stury, with whom Chaucer was associated. That Chaucer himself knew Wyclif personally is made almost certain by the fact that Wyclif, by his own statement, was for a time king's chaplain and must have preached at court while Chaucer was a member of the household.

Chaucer's diplomatic experience also brought him into close relations with many of the most distinguished nobles and ecclesiastics of the day. Among those with whom he was sent

on foreign embassies were: Sir Guichard d'Angle, military tutor to King Richard; Sir John Burley, also Richard's tutor, and brother to Sir Simon Burley, who brought Queen Anne to England, and with whom Chaucer served on a commission of the peace during the critical time when the French were on the point of invading England; the Earl of Salisbury, who fought at Creçy and Poitiers and was one of the original founders of the order of the Garter; Walter Skirlawe, bishop of Durham, one of the greatest ecclesiastics and builders of the time; and many other men famous in their day as leaders in the affairs of church and state.

In his business career at the custom house, Chaucer came into daily contact, year after year, with the most important and wealthy citizens of London — men who were able to lend the king of their own fortunes thousands of pounds at a time, on the security of the crown jewels. Among them, Sir William Walworth, Sir Nicholas Brembre, and Sir John Philipot were all collectors of the customs while Chaucer was controller — the two latter for many years. Walworth was mayor of London during the Wat Tyler rebellion in 1381 and with Brembre and Philipot was knighted for his gallant conduct at that time. Brembre, through Richard's personal liking for him, roused the enmity of Gloucester and was among the favorites executed in 1388.

As justice of the peace and member of parliament Chaucer must have made the acquaintance of the principal lawyers and politicians of the time; with some of them his association must have been intimate.

In the literary world Chaucer was undoubtedly the leader of his time. The only other English poet of note was his friend, and also to some extent his rival, John Gower, a gentleman also belonging to the court circle, and author of three huge volumes — the *Miroir de l'Omme*, in French; the *Vox Clamantis*, in Latin; the *Confessio Amantis*, in English — and of many lyrics in French. In 1378, when Chaucer was sent to Italy, Gower acted as his attorney; and later, Chaucer dedicated his *Troilus and Creseyde* to Gower and "philosophical Strode," jointly. It is supposed that this Strode was Ralph Strode, an Oxford scholar who wrote against the philosophical and

theological views of Wyclif but was apparently on friendly terms with him — undoubtedly the Ralph Strode who moved to London and became "common serjeant of the city" on November 25, 1373. The recently discovered association of Chaucer and Strode as sureties for John Hende settles the question. Chaucer also mentions with praise, in a way that suggests personal acquaintance, Otho de Granson, a knight of Savoy who fought on the side of the English as early as 1372 and in 1393 was pensioned by Richard. Three of his poems Chaucer translated and combined into the *Compleynt of Venus*.

In his foreign missions Chaucer must have become acquainted with some members of the French royal family, and with the rulers of Genoa, Florence, and Milan; and he was sent once on business to Sir John Hawkwood, the famous English free lance in the service of the duke of Milan. Chaucer also singles out for praise the Italian jurist and writer, Giovanni di Lignano ('Clerk's Tale,' 34ff.), in a way that seems to imply personal acquaintance.

That Chaucer had a personal acquaintance with some of the famous French poets of the time who so strongly influenced his early work is highly probable. There is some evidence that the poet Machaut, in whose manner Chaucer's first poems were written, was in Calais when Chaucer was there in October, 1360; but we cannot prove that the two men actually met. When, earlier in the same year, Chaucer was taken prisoner near Rheims, both Machaut and Deschamps, who later became a great admirer of Chaucer, were living in that city; but we do not know that Chaucer was taken to Rheims. That he knew Froissart, however, is practically certain, for Froissart was a member of Queen Philippa's household from 1361 to 1366, composing for her "beaux dittiés et traités amoreux," and Chaucer was also at this time probably attached to some member of the royal family.

When Chaucer was in Italy in 1372–73, he may have met both Petrarch and Boccaccio; but there is no evidence that he did. Both were old men, and Boccaccio was ill and living in retirement. Although Chaucer draws upon the work of Boccaccio more than upon any one other writer, he never mentions

him by name; and the only hint that he knew Petrarch comes from the fact that he mentions him by name and speaks with regret of his death.

Of Chaucer's numerous literary disciples, the most distinguished were: Thomas Hoccleve, a clerk in the exchequer office; John Lydgate, a monk of Bury St. Edmund's; an anonymous monk of Canterbury who wrote an account of the Pilgrims' stay at Canterbury and the amusing *Tale of Beryn*, purporting to be the first tale on the homeward journey; Thomas Usk, a city official executed with Brembre in 1388, and author of the *Testament of Love;* Sir Thomas Clanvowe and Henry Scogan, referred to above, and a group of Scotch poets who imitated Chaucer during the fifteenth century. There are also numerous other poems, about the writers of which little or nothing is known, which would probably not have been written, had Chaucer not shown the way.

IV

CHAUCER'S ENGLAND

The General Background

To reconstruct imaginatively the aspect and culture of Chaucer's England is perhaps impossible — at least to an American. City life as we know it today is entirely different from the city life of that time; and country life as it exists or ever has existed in America is perhaps even less like country life in fourteenth century England. But the attempt at reconstruction is worth undertaking, for our understanding of Chaucer, of the conditions under which he wrote and of the spirit of his writing, will be greatly aided by the effort to bear in mind some of the outstanding features of the physical and social background of his life.

First of all, let us remind ourselves of the physical aspects of his world. England itself — exclusive of Scotland and Wales — has an area of about 51,000 square miles — that is, it is slightly larger than the state of New York, somewhat smaller

than Alabama or Arkansas or North Carolina. Including Wales, it is slightly larger than Michigan and smaller than Florida or Georgia. From London to the farthest points in England that we know Chaucer to have visited — Hatfield in the north and Petherton in the west — is 150 miles in a direct line. The country itself is about 250 miles in length, with an average width of less than two hundred. Instead of the vast cities, the multitudinous factories and mines and roaring centers of industrial frenzy packing 30,000,000 people into the tight little island of today, the country was then predominantly rural and had a population of not more than 2,500,000. The largest city was London, not the enormous, sprawling web of splendor and misery overhung with smoke and dirty fog that we now know, but, notwithstanding its mediaeval lack of effective plumbing and drainage, a city which fairly deserved William Morris's epithets of "small" and "white" and "clean" — a city not of public parks but of many and large private gardens, crossed by running streams, and swept by breezes from the thinly populated open fields which extended up to its very walls. No underground railway or motor bus was needed for transportation. It was about 2,000 yards long by 1,000 yards wide, and all its inhabitants — about 35,000 or 40,000 — were in a certain sense neighbors. It is somewhat surprising to compare it in size with cities and towns of the United States and to learn that it was not so large as Butte, Montana, Lexington, Kentucky, Pasadena, California, or Shreveport, Louisiana; and only a little, if any, larger than Brookline, Massachusetts, Dubuque, Iowa, or Madison, Wisconsin. The next largest cities of fourteenth century England — York, Norwich, Chester, Coventry, Lincoln, Newcastle — ranged from 11,000 inhabitants down to 3,000 or 4,000. In the south and east and central parts, scattered at intervals of ten miles or so, were smaller market towns, usually clustered about some ancient castle or abbey; and in every fertile valley and plain were villages of 60 to 150 persons, formed by the manor houses and the tenants free and unfree belonging to the manorial estates. In every direction, from even the slightest eminence, one could see dotting the landscape at intervals of only a few miles abbeys, monasteries, nunneries, cathedral towers, or spires of

large parish churches — unmistakable evidence of the wealth of the church, the enormous number of the clergy, and the dominant part which religion, or at least ecclesiasticism, occupied in the lives of the people. In the north and northwest, cities were smaller, market towns rarer, and manor houses more widely scattered. As a consequence religious establishments, too, were fewer in number. Throughout the land, even in its most thickly settled parts, vast stretches were still covered by virgin forests, and wide uplands were dotted with flocks of sheep.

Rural England

If we realize the stability of English life as compared with our own restlessness and continued reconstruction, we can the more easily imagine that the English countryside today, except where industrialism has ruined it, is much as Chaucer saw it. The oaks, the elms, the beeches, the hawthorn hedges, the hazel copses, the yews in the churchyards, the wild heath, rolling away purple for miles in the late summer, yellow with broom and with gorse that, as folk say, "is out of bloom only when kissing's out of fashion," — all these are almost unchanged. There are alive still oaks and yews that were five or six hundred years old in his time. There are still great tracts of woodland in the old royal forests of which he and his friends were from time to time among the official keepers. Then, as now, Kent was the garden of England, and although there were no hopfields and no queer conical-tipped oosthouses in which hops are dried, the county in which he lived for a time and in which he imagined his pilgrims journeying to Canterbury was full of orchards of apples, cherries, and pears; was rich with gardens of strawberries, and the herbs so lavishly used in mediaeval cooking and medicine — fennel, saffron, marjoram, mint, parsley, coriander, and many others; and the gardens were gay with flowers that make England beautiful still: daffodils and primroses, foxgloves and fleurs-de-lys, violets, lavender, lilies, cowslips, roses, and periwinkle. And we know from Chaucer himself that in spring the trees were thronged with singing birds and the grass was blossomed over with pink and white daisies, and that in autumn the hedges were full of ripe blackberries.

Travel

Up and down these hedged-in roads there was a deal of travel, especially along the road between Canterbury and London, but extensive enough over all England. Nor, indeed, were the roads so bad as we are accustomed to think. Many of them had been laid with stone by the Romans — their square-blocked paving is still traceable here and there — and all were more or less kept in repair by the great landowners whose agents were busy traversing the land to collect the rents of their vast estates, and by officers of religious foundations that equalled or surpassed them in their scattered holdings. The injunctions of the Church against the sin of sloth fell in with the popular love of holiday-making in fine weather, and sent many thousands of persons annually jogging from shrine to shrine in all parts of the country, and "specially from every shires ende" to Canterbury, where by the miracles of St. Thomas à Becket it was believed the sick were healed.

Besides business managers of estates and pilgrims, there were thousands of other travelers frequenting the roads. The great households of the nobility were almost constantly traveling from one estate to another, for it was the custom, not to transport the food to the family, but the family to the food, so that as soon as the supplies were exhausted at one manor, the household moved to another. Local fairs in the summer months drew people from the surrounding country to buy and to sell, and the great fairs were thronged with tradesmen from the cities and from abroad who offered for sale all the necessaries and luxuries of mediaeval life. There were also Oxford and Cambridge students on their way to and from college and in vacation time wandering about begging the wherewithal to "scoleye." There were merchants and diplomats coming and going on their business abroad. If Dover is now less than an hour from Calais, even then, with a fair wind, it was only two or three hours. There are records, not only of many men who continually had business on the Continent, of scholars who studied in Paris and in Italy, but of young men who went abroad exactly as modern tourists travel, for interest in the life of strange lands.

Even today, riding along the pleasant country lanes in an English spring, between banks of primroses and violets, with larks singing invisible in the pale-blue sky, with church towers or spires above clumps of elms where rooks cluster and caw, where the red-tiled cottages covered with roses and honeysuckle are built as they were built hundreds of years ago, we can recapture at least in part the mood in which Chaucer gathered his folk at the Tabard and sent them riding to Canterbury.

The whole organization of country life was, as we have said, different from anything familiar to us in America. We are accustomed to think of the country, at least of that part lying beyond the suburbs of the city, as consisting of isolated and widely scattered farmhouses relieved here and there by the presence of a crossroads store or a typical country village of shops and workshops. Until the automobile came to shorten distances, the dominant note of country life in America was isolation, each family being shut in to a monotony of loneliness relieved only by the annual gregariousness of harvest and by occasional trips to the country church and the country store.

Rural England led no such isolated life. The basis of its structure was the manor, a large tract of land usually partly arable, partly meadow, and partly forest, dominated by the manor house, round which clustered as a nuclear village the houses of the tenants of the manor and the artisans who served their needs. The land of the manor was not divided into separate tracts and distributed to the tenants in individual possession, but was managed as a unit. The strip assigned last year to one tenant would be assigned this year to another, and next year would be allowed to lie fallow. Each tenant held his strip only till after harvest, and all the strips were worked coöperatively. Seldom did a tenant own enough oxen to do his own plowing. Accordingly, the villagers worked together, plowing and reaping every strip in its proper turn, though the produce of the strips went to the individual owners. The implements and stock were furnished by the owner. The fundamental characteristics of the manorial group were on the one hand the intimate association of its members in common

occupation and a common village life and on the other hand its self-sufficiency — its economic and social independence. The introduction of new tenants from the outside was possible, but it was rare. The same families tilled the village fields from father to son. Every manor had its own law court, presided over by the lord of the manor or his representative, and its own church, the priest of which usually belonged to the same social class as his parishioners.

The number of craftsmen or artisans attached to a manor varied of course with the size of the manor. The smaller manors would have few persons devoted to special trades, but even the larger would have fewer than one might be inclined to suppose. There would be no need for a carpenter except upon very large manors, for almost any of the peasants was capable of doing odd jobs of carpentry, and all would join together in a large job such as the erection of the wooden framework for the houses and barns. The houses of the villagers themselves were too rude to require the services of skilled workmen. Most of them were built of posts wattled and plastered with clay or mud. The better class of yeomen had timber houses built on a frame, the spaces being either lathed and plastered within and without or filled with clay kneaded up with chopped straw, and some of the barns were built on the same plan. In parts of the country where stone was found, the larger barns and better houses were often built of stone, but brick-making seems to have been a lost art. Perhaps the blacksmith was the craftsman whose services were most frequently called for. Farm implements of many kinds involved the use of iron, and the services of the smith were necessary for making or repairing these implements. A smith therefore was likely to be found among the villagers of the larger manors and occasionally among those of the smaller. As we find in the manorial accounts scarcely any records of purchases of cloth for the tenants, we are justified in assuming that weaving was commonly practiced as a household occupation, and that each family probably wove the cloth necessary for its own use. This was undoubtedly the cloth of coarse, undyed wool commonly called russet. In like manner each family in the smaller villages appears to have produced its own bread and

beer, though in the larger villages we have records of both bakers and brewers.

The food of the villagers was abundant, but coarse and almost unbelievably limited in kind. The most striking feature — but this holds true in large measure only for the food of the poor, for the rich had gardens both in town and country — was the almost entire absence of vegetables. Peas, beans, carrots, onions, and a few other vegetables were not unknown, but the fare of even the wealthier peasants consisted largely of porridge, bread, beer, and meat, usually pork, varied only with milk, cheese, eggs, and the flesh of fowls, while the poorer lived as did the poor widow in the 'Nuns' Priest's Tale:'

> "Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak —
> Milk and broun breed — in which she foond no lak;
> Seynd bacon, and somtyme an ey or tweye."

The villages had no shops for the sale of such wares as we now expect to find in even our smallest villages. This was partly because many of the articles which to us seem indispensable were entirely unknown to the Middle Ages, but chiefly because of a difference in the commercial system. The countryside and the smaller towns of the Middle Ages made their purchases largely in two ways: either at markets and fairs, or from travelling pedlars, called chapmen. Markets were held in most of the towns on certain days of the week; in London and some other cities every day. At the place assigned for the market were set up by tradesmen stalls containing all the varied forms of merchandise known to the Middle Ages: imported cloths, jewelry and trinkets of all sorts, pepper, salt, knives, scissors and needles, and even books, though these would be found only in the larger markets or at the fairs.

The fairs were one of the most picturesque and interesting features of mediaeval life. They could be held only by royal grant and were strictly limited in place and time. Usually a fair was an annual event lasting from one or two days to one or more weeks, the profits of which went to some specified object, such as the maintenance of a religious house, the building or repairing of a church, and the like. The same organization

or person might, however, hold several fairs under different charters at different seasons of the year. To the fairs came not only local tradesmen, but dealers in all sorts of wares from the large cities and even from foreign countries, and at the larger fairs might be found every kind of article of use or luxury known to the people of the time. It is easy to see that without some such organization the distribution of certain of the rarer luxuries would have been difficult or even impossible. The fairs were the great markets for silks, Oriental goods of all sorts, known in the language of the time as "spicerie," armor, fine horses, jewelry, manuscripts, dogs, singing birds, monkeys, and other outlandish novelties. Each tradesman paid a fee for the privilege of selling at the fair, and special courts — called courts of pie-powder, or "the dusty foot" — were organized for the speedy settlement of any disputes which might arise.

To the fairs came also all sorts of mediaeval entertainers: minstrels, tumblers, rope-dancers, sword-swallowers, and jugglers of all sorts — the whole motley crowd of masterless strollers who lived under the permanent anathema of the Church.

Less picturesque than the fairs and offering a much more limited choice of goods, but hardly less important in mediaeval life, were the pedlars or travelling chapmen. This class of traders is still to be found in many rural districts both of England and America, but in far smaller numbers than during the Middle Ages. Then they penetrated every part of the country, dazzling the rustics with their fine wares, their nimble wits, and their mastery of what is now somewhat bombastically called the psychology of salesmanship. The Autolycus of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* belonged to this class of tradesmen and differed little if at all in his stock of wares or methods of dealing from his fourteenth century ancestors.

The most varied and truthful pictures of the life and mental outlook of these country people are undoubtedly those given us by Chaucer himself in his later, more realistic, tales. The poor widows in the tales of the Nuns' Priest and Friar, the peasants and church officials in the tales of the Reeve, the Miller, the Friar, and the Summoner give us such finished sketches of the daily life in the countryside and small towns of fourteenth

century England as no modern writer has either the knowledge or the skill to create.

The Larger Towns

In the larger towns and cities, fourteenth century life was very different from that of the rural districts. Not only in London, but in such towns as York, Chester, Coventry, Norwich, Bristol, Dartmouth and Ipswich, industry and commerce were highly organized, and although even in them the predominantly agricultural basis of mediaeval life was felt, the rivalries of commerce and industrial production were beginning to dominate social life and to control municipal politics.

The fundamental feature of city and town life was the organization of both commerce and trade into trade or craft gilds. These organizations had, as is well-known, certain features in common with modern labor unions, but differed from them very materially both in the nature and the objects of organization. They resemble one another in being "industrial organizations concerned ultimately with the same fundamental purpose: the maintenance of the standard of life. The chief object of the trade union is to organize the workers in order to raise the standard of living, and by the coöperation of forces prevent the degradation of their social and economic status. The craft gilds were no less concerned with securing for every one of their members opportunities for a fair and just remuneration of their labors. Both organizations rest in principle upon the conviction that combined action can alone insure adequate maintenance for the workers; to this degree the trade union carries on the tradition of the older gild system. Here, however, the resemblance ends."

The craft gilds were select bodies of skilled artisans, and never included the whole body of workers. The unskilled workmen were unorganized, received lower wages, and participated in no way in the control of trade or trade conditions. Among the skilled workers, however, who formed the membership of the gilds, were to be found craftsmen of all grades — journeymen workers, middlemen, and masters or capitalists. The gilds were purely local organizations, and member-

ship was limited nominally to tradesmen of the same town, though there are instances of gilds which included members from the neighboring country. A striking difference between the modern trade union and the mediaeval craft gild is that the trade union is concerned only with the interests of its own members, whereas the craft gild aimed to serve the public as well, not only securing fair wages prices, and laboring conditions for its members, but insisting upon sound workmanship, good quality, and a price fair to the consumer as well as to the producer. Finally, the craft gilds were semi-public and semi-religious organizations. Not only were they chartered by the king, but they formed integral parts of the municipal organization, furnishing representatives to it, but under its control, and they were always organized under the patronage of some saint and made definite provisions for religious ceremonies and charitable duties.

The services rendered by these organizations to mediaeval industry and trade were of the highest importance. It is a mistake to believe, as some enthusiastic writers of the Middle Ages apparently do, that the mediaeval craftsman was an artist interested primarily in maintaining high quality in all his materials and honesty and beauty in all his workmanship. The records of mediaeval gilds and the ordinances of the towns are largely devoted to efforts to prevent cheating and frauds of all sorts in materials and workmanship. As Professor Salzmann remarks: "The mediaeval craftsman was not called a man of craft for nothing! He had no more conscience than a plumber, and his knowledge of ways that are dark and tricks that are vain was extensive and peculiar. The subtle craft of the London bakers, who, while making up their customers' dough, stole a large portion of it under their customers' eyes by means of a little trap-door in the kneading board and a boy sitting under the counter, was exceptional only in its ingenuity. Cloth was stretched and strained to the utmost and cunningly folded to hide defects; a length of bad cloth would be joined onto a length of superior quality, or a whole cheap cloth substituted for the good cloth which the customers had purchased; inferior leather was faked up to look like the best and sold at night to the unwary; pots and kettles were made of bad metal,

which melted when put on the fire; and everything that could be weighed or measured was sold by false measure.

"In 1390 it was pointed out that the frauds of the west country clothiers had not only endangered the reputations and even the lives of merchants who bought them for export, but had brought dishonour on the English name abroad. Two years later it was the reputation of Guildford cloths that had been damaged by sharp practices. . . . To give them their due, the gilds recognized the importance to their own interests of maintaining a high standard of workmanship, and cooperated loyally with the municipal authorities to that end."

The aspects of city life in mediaeval England were therefore very different from those of country life. London, the city with which we are principally concerned, though small, was rich and busy. Its most prominent citizens were merchants and importers, and foreign traders flocked to it from all parts of the known world. Merchants from China brought goods by caravan across central Asia to the great trade centers of the near East, Novgorod and Constantinople, whence they were taken up either by the German merchants of the free Hanse towns or the equally enterprising Venetians and Genoese and brought to London and other western ports. Through these channels came silks, furs, sandalwood, and all the vast range of Oriental luxuries. The merchants who brought them to London had permanent establishments there, occupied definite parts of the city, and were under the special protection of the king. The wine-merchants of Spain, southern France, and the Rhineland were also among the wealthiest and most important traders to London, and likewise enjoyed royal patronage. Besides the wines, they brought gold and silver cups, precious stones, fine textiles, and coats of mail. In general, the ships which brought these cargoes were loaded for the return voyage with England's most valuable product, the fine wool and wool fells which were sought for by all the rest of the world.

We have no space for a detailed account of mediaeval commerce. Its extent and value can most easily be understood from the wealth and power attained by some of the leading merchants. Perhaps the most striking example in England is furnished by the family of the De la Poles. The founder of

the family, Sir William De la Pole, was the second son of Sir William De la Pole, a merchant of Hull. The elder brother, Sir Richard, became prominent as collector of the customs, as the king's chief butler and as partner with his younger brother in various loans to the king. In 1327 the brothers advanced for the campaign against the Scots and the wages of the Netherland mercenaries 6,000 *l.*, a sum having a present-day purchasing value of perhaps $900,000. In 1338 Edward III gave Sir William an acknowledgment for 18,500 *l.*, a present value of approximately $2,700,000. Sir William's son, Michael, continued his activities as merchant and government official, becoming successively admiral of the fleet and chancellor of the realm, and was finally rewarded for his service with the name and title of earl of Suffolk. Although he was impeached and condemned to death by the parliament of 1386, modern historians have concluded that the only real complaint against him was his attachment to an unpopular policy. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Michael, who in 1397 was restored to his father's dignity as earl of Suffolk and baron De la Pole. The later history of the family does not concern us here. It is interesting, however, to recall that William, the fourth earl and first duke of Suffolk, married Geoffrey Chaucer's granddaughter.

Merchant Princes of London

Even more instructive for our purpose are the careers of three London merchants who for many years led the rich and powerful victualing trades in their effort to control the city, and who gave their support to the young king in his contest with his uncle, John of Gaunt. These were John Philipot and Nicholas Brembre, members of the Grocers' Company, and William Walworth of the Fishmongers'. They will be recalled as having supported Richard when he faced Wat Tyler and the peasants at Smithfield in the revolt of 1381 and Walworth created the dramatic opportunity for Richard by drawing his sword and slaying Tyler. Brembre's association with Chaucer, whether one of friendship or not, was at least intimate, for he was one of the collectors of wool customs during ten of the

years when Chaucer was controller. All three were men of great wealth, as is clearly indicated by the sums assessed against them in the various loans which the city made to the king. Philipot, if not the wealthiest, at least made use of his wealth in picturesque and public-spirited enterprises which are a matter of record. Immediately after the accession of Richard to the throne, he and other London merchants lent the king 10,000 *l.*, a sum equivalent in purchasing power to about $1,500,000 on the present basis of prices. In the same year, when the whole land had been thrown into a state of alarm by the capture of the Isle of Wight and the burning of Hastings by the French and the seizure of a number of English merchant vessels by a squadron of Scotch, French, and Spanish ships under the leadership of one John Mercer, Philipot at his own expense fitted out a squadron with a thousand armed men, pursued Mercer, wrested from him the English vessels he had captured, and in turn seized fifteen vessels of Mercer's fleet. Again in 1379, the year after his mayoralty, he earned the effusive gratitude of the city by offering to erect at his own cost one of the two stone towers sixty feet high below London Bridge, between which a chain was to be suspended across the river to secure the city against attacks by the French. Again in the summer of 1380, he provided ships for the Earl of Buckingham's expedition to Brittany, and when the delay in setting out had compelled many of the soldiers to pawn their armor, he redeemed from pawn the armor of a thousand men.

These instances will perhaps serve to suggest the wealth of London merchants in Chaucer's time, without citing the picturesque legends about Richard Whittington, or those about Henry Picard, who is reported to have entertained four kings at a banquet and to have compelled all of them to win rich cups and jewels by playing with loaded dice. Yet it is to be remarked that the legends concerning the wealth of Whittington and Picard were scarcely, if at all, an exaggeration of truth.

It has been noted in passing that Brembre, Philipot, and Walworth were all members of the trades which dealt in victuals, the so-called "victualing trades," which were specially noted for their wealth, and that Chaucer may be making a sly hit at

these trades when in the Prologue he says of the Friar that he would have nothing to do with the poor,

"But al with riche and sellers of vitaille."

Chaucer's London

But Chaucer's London has almost vanished. We must reconstruct it from a few fragments, old pictures, and old descriptions. It extended from the Tower at the east end to Ludgate and Newgate on the west, and from the four gates in the north wall — Aldgate (where Chaucer lived for twelve years), Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, and Aldersgate — to the Thames on the south. Within this oblong space, little more than a mile long and about half a mile wide, were living before the Great Plague in 1349 (when Chaucer was a child) some 40,000 people.

From the Surrey side near Chaucer's Tabard Inn across the broad river, it must have looked a low, close huddle of gabled roofs, with a great number of stone towers, among them the tall, square, four-pinnacled keep of William the Conqueror to the right, the great spire of St. Paul's more than 500 feet high near the center, and score upon score of smaller spires and towers of other churches, rising above the red-tiled roofs, against a background of green hills.

Passing under the tall tower of St. Saviour's, Southwark (where Chaucer's friend Gower was buried in 1408), one crossed London Bridge by a narrow paved roadway bordered by thick-set houses and shops, except at the middle, where in an open space one could look down at the swift current running under the high round arches and strongly-buttressed stone piers. From Bridge Street, on the city side (where great chains were drawn to keep out the peasant rebels of 1381), a veritable tangle of streets rarely more than twenty feet wide — usually much less — branched out in every direction. Turning to the east, one came to Billingsgate fish market. A drawing made in the fifteenth century shows this to have been a great open structure with beautifully arcaded arches.

Immediately to the east of this was the dock where the Genoese galleys brought merchandise and news from Italy;

and to the east beyond this, the narrow, two-story custom house where Chaucer worked for fourteen years; then a few houses, and the lane and moat before the Tower.

Turning north from the river, one crossed the wide open space of Tower Green and then passed among gardens to Chaucer's home at Aldgate, a walk of ten minutes or less. Inside the gate and west of it were the great buildings of the Augustinian friars and the priory of Holy Trinity; outside the wall and southeast was the convent of the Minoresses. Standing on the city walls, one could look downward upon the long street running into the country to the eastward, on which Chaucer's mother had many lands and rents by inheritance. Below the old brick wall, begun by the Romans, was the wide moat, and beyond it the fenny land and heath, and the forest from which brushwood, charcoal, and faggots were brought in to keep the city fires burning.

Moving upon the wall, so that the house of the Augustinian friars should not block the view, one must have been able to see at a glance how the Church dominated the city — with friaries and priories everywhere: southward, toward the Tower, the Crutched Friars; westward, toward St. Paul's, the Grey Friars; and beyond the Cathedral, the Black Friars; and beyond them, outside Ludgate, the White Friars; and beyond them, the domains of the ancient religious-military order of the Knights Templars, then the property of a similar order, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; and beyond this, the great abbey of Westminster; and to the north, flanking Smithfield, London's playground outside the walls, where sports and tournaments were held, the priory of St. Bartholomew-the-Great. And besides these splendid edifices, at every turn of the street stood a parish church endowed and maintained by the rich merchants and the craftsmen of the gilds.

Through the labyrinth of cobbled streets, with here and there a gleam of water where they were crossed by the Fleet, the Walbrook, or the Old Bourne, ran two great thoroughfares: the lower, Thames Street — from the Tower, south of St. Paul's Churchyard, to Blackfriars, where it came out by tortuous ways at Ludgate — on which the merchantry had fine dwellings (Chaucer's father among them had a tenement on the bank of

Walbrook in the shadow of St. Martin's Vintry); and the upper, from Aldgate (Chaucer's home from 1374 to 1386) into the great central market of the town, Cheapside, and out of the city by a narrow way north of St. Paul's, at Newgate. Here the roadway was wide enough for the "ridings" or processions; here stood the great conduit that called forth so many city ordinances for its protection; here stood one of the exquisite Eleanor crosses built by King Edward I when he brought his queen home to bury her in Westminster. Here were the great "selds" or arcades of merchandise, the transfer of which forms the content of so many city deeds; and south and north of this were the twenty-four wards, each with its dominant trades and crafts and its streets and lanes often named for the things made or sold there. Among the wards to the south were Cordwainers Street ward, where some of Chaucer's kinsfolk lived, and the Vintry (vintners) in which his father and other near kinsmen owned property. And among the streets in the neighborhood associated with his name were Bread Street, Milk Street, Fish Street, Saddlers' Row, Sopers' Lane, and others indicative of pursuits followed there, some of the names surviving still.

Chaucer's Home Surroundings

It seems likely that Chaucer was born in the Thames Street house — the only house we know his father to have owned, except through his wife's inheritance, and her tenements were apparently leased out. If so, we can reconstruct with some definiteness the kind of home in which he lived as a boy. Most of the houses of the time were two stories high, with a ground floor, and sometimes a cellar, used for business purposes and a projecting upper story (called a *soler*), in which the family sometimes lived. These solers often projected so far out into the narrow street that neighbors over the way had an intimate view of family affairs. Chaucer himself touches upon this when he makes Pandarus question Cressida about the affairs of her neighbors across the street.

> And after noon ful sleighly Pandarus
> Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,

And seide, 'Nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous that stant afor-yein us?'
'Which hous? quod she, and com for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde;
(*Troilus and Criseyde*, II, 1185 ff.)

When the lower story was used as a shop, its whole front was open to the street in the day, but closed at night by great wooden shutters — a practice that still obtains in old-fashioned places in England. From the street, then, one could look in and see the greater part of the wares for sale. An inventory of a haberdasher's shop made in 1378 may be representative of the contents of such a shop, and is interesting in view of Chaucer's inclusion of a haberdasher among his tradesmen-pilgrims. It included: laces, points (ornamental tags), caps, nightcaps, hats, hoods, a cap block, purses, beads, an osculatory (a glass vessel for protecting a relic to be kissed), pen-cases, inkhorns, tablets, paper, chains, a girdle, cushion frames, cradle-bows, pepper mills, linen thread, eyeglasses, a fly-cage, combs, gaming-tables, babies' boots of white woolen cloth, a wooden whistle, whipcord, and a painted cloth representing "Him Crucified." An inventory of a small stationers' shop in a tiny village would — except for the output of modern journalism — not be so very different in type today.

From this list it is easy to see the kind of things for which there was enough demand for a supply to be kept ready and those — such as a girdle, a fly-cage, and a painted cloth — which were usually made to order.

But very similar to the shop was the workshop in which gild members and their apprentices sat in the public view, each at his particular specialized form of his craft. Nor is it easy for us to realize the degree to which specialization was carried. Among metalworkers alone there were the following: gold-smiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, enamelers, jewelers, buckle-smiths, smiths (blacksmiths), nail-makers, spurriers, armorers, armor-polishers, helmet-makers, braziers (brass-founders), plumbers, pewterers, bell-founders, wire-drawers, makers of sword blades, makers of knife handles, seal-makers, and almost certainly other specialized craftsmen. A man who ordered a saddle had to go to one shop for the wooden frame, to another

to have it stuffed, to another for the leather work, and to another for the metal trappings. So every cobbled street in London, with its gutter running down the middle, was lined on both sides with a honeycomb of small shops and workshops in which every man was a specialist.

But Chaucer's father was a vintner of Vintry ward. In 1381 his house stood between the houses of William le Gauger and John le Mazelyner, whose names show that their ancestors, if not themselves, had been engaged in the associated work of gauging wine and of making maplewood cups (*mazers*) to drink from. It is altogether likely that John Chaucer, who was of the same social status as these men, had a house very similar to theirs and we know from two wills in the Gauger family (dated 1324 and 1335) what their house was like.

It contained two cellars — and a cellar was certainly needed for John Chaucer's business — over one of which was built a hall, a "parlour," a bedchamber with a chimney, and a kitchen with a pantry and other offices. The dwelling part was unusually elaborate for the times in that it contained besides the hall or general living-room, a private sitting-room, and a fireplace in the bedchamber.

From inventories of other houses of the time we can tell approximately how the Chaucers' house would have been furnished. The hall was of course the largest room in the house. In earlier times it had been the centre of family life, and still remained so in conservative homes. There would be a fireplace near which would be standing the master's chair — the only chair in the room unless the mistress also had one. The meals would be served on the long trestle table, put away between meals, and the family would sit on long forms or benches. Away from the table, they could choose between stools and the benches along the walls, which may have been those used at table. The walls and benches would be covered with tapestry and there would be cushions of the same. The tapestry would show a conventional design. As a coat of arms was often used for this design, the Chaucers may have used a pattern of three birds' heads (as on John Chaucer's seal) or perhaps only the diagonal stripe of argent and gules that Geoffrey later used in his coat of arms. There may have

been one or two small tables in the hall; there was certainly a sideboard for the family plate. While many of the dishes may have been of pewter or wood, there would certainly have been some silver spoons and drinking-cups and earthenware jugs, and one or more of the popular mazers or silver-mounted cups of maplewood.

In the chamber with the chimney, there would have been as many beds as the family required — ponderous structures with mattresses (of straw or rushes), bolsters, pillows, sheets and pillowcases of fine linen, blankets and coverlets, and curtains hanging from the walls, and probably featherbeds. There might be a chair or stools; and there were certainly chests for sitting upon as well as for containing the master's armor, the wearing apparel of the family, the household linen, and whatever else there was of value. Almost certainly one chest or strong-box was used for coin, jewels, and deeds and other muniments. In such a chest there might be a book or two of a religious character, perhaps a Book of Hours. Only very exceptionally would there have been any book of secular interest, except perhaps a law book.

The overhanging soler would give a sort of square bay window, in which there would be lattice windows with small panes of glass, and a window seat with cushions.

Although these houses overhung the street in front, it is certain that many of them had gardens in the rear, just as so many London houses have today. We know that John Chaucer's land extended to the water of Walbrook on the north, and also that there were gardens in the neighborhood, inasmuch as a coroner's roll informs us that a man fell from a pear tree in a garden there and was killed.

It was in a city and a country such as we have tried, not to describe, but to hint at, that Chaucer lived and wrote. Unless we can obtain some sense of the compactness of his world; of the intimacy between all classes of society, in spite of the clearest recognition of differences of rank and status; and of the closeness of that world, despite its sophistication and its fondness for wealth and display, to garden and forest and other country sights and scenes, we shall not understand the spirit in which he wrote, or that in which he was read.

Money

As there are several respects in which the expense accounts, wages, prices, and other subjects connected with money are likely to be puzzling to the student of the fourteenth century, it seems desirable to make some brief statements on this subject.

Accounts were kept in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence as they still are in England, but there were no coins corresponding to pounds or shillings, and there were several coins in circulation the names and values of which are unfamiliar to us of the present day.

Down to the year 1343 the only metal commonly coined into money in England was silver. At some places on the continent copper was coined into what was called "black money," and these copper coins sometimes circulated in England. In 1331 their circulation was entirely prohibited, but in 1339 it was recognized that they were needed in business transactions, and their circulation was temporarily permitted. Gold had been coined sporadically even in Anglo-Saxon times and in 1257 Henry III coined a gold penny, weighing as much as two silver pence, and proclaimed its value as twenty pence. But these were out of circulation long before Chaucer's day, and the coinage of gold did not really begin until the reign of Edward III. In 1343–44 that monarch ordered the coinage of three gold coins of the values respectively of 6 *s.*, 3 *s.*, and 1 *s.* 6 *d.;* but these coins were demonetized in the following year because they had been overvalued in comparison with the current silver money. In 1345 began the coinage of a new series of gold coins — nobles, half-nobles (called demi-nobles or maille-nobles), and quarter nobles (called ferling nobles). The value of the noble was equal to two gold florins, or 6 *s.* 8 *d.* The gold noble weighed originally $128\frac{4}{7}$ grains, but was soon reduced to 120.

The silver coins which circulated in Chaucer's day were the penny, halfpenny, and farthing, and the groat (fourpence) and half groat (twopence). The weight of these coins varied at different times. Originally, of course, the penny weighed 24 grains — "twenty-four grains make one pennyweight," etc. — but its weight was gradually reduced until in 1351 it weighed

18 grains, and the other coins were reduced proportionately. These reduced weights remained constant throughout Chaucer's life.

In comparing the gold and silver coins of Chaucer's day with those of the present time, it is necessary to disregard their nominal values. The present gold sovereign with a nominal value of 20 *s.* weighs 123.274 grains, but as this is only twenty-two carats fine, it obviously contains no more gold than the fourteenth century noble (nominal value 6 *s.* 8 *d.*), nearly twenty-four carats fine, which weighed 120 grains. The fourteenth century silver penny, or sterling, contained about one-fifth as much silver as the modern English shilling or the American quarter dollar.

The names, values, and weights of the coins in common use were as follows:

Coins	*Metal*	*Value*	*Weight*
farthing	silver	¼ *d.*	4½ gr.
halfpenny	"	½ *d.*	9 gr.
penny, or sterling	"	1 *d.*	18 gr.
half groat	"	2 *d.*	36 gr.
groat	"	4 *d.*	72 gr.
noble	gold	6 *s.* 8 *d.*	120 gr.
demi-noble or maille	"	3 *s.* 4 *d.*	60 gr.
ferling	"	1 *s.* 8 *d.*	30 gr.

There was no such coin as a mark, but the term was in very common use. Its value — 13 *s.* 4 *d.* — may seem an odd one for a monetary unit, though it is not much odder than 21 *s.* Originally *mark* was, like *pound*, a measure of weight, and meant two-thirds of a pound. This relation between the mark and the pound continued in England — though not in some other countries — when the terms became monetary.

The foreign coins which were most familiar to Englishmen were florins — a name applied to various coins issued originally in Florence and imitated elsewhere — and crowns, or florins d'escu, better known in England as shields. Naturally the small Dutch coin called a "mite" was also well known.

Another difficulty connected with the money of the four-

teenth century, and indeed of all times previous to our own, is that there has been a continuous depreciation in the purchasing power of money, due in part to the increase in the supply of the precious metals and in part to the development of various substitutes for metallic coinage. Many attempts have been made to establish a multiple for converting money of ancient times into their modern equivalents in purchasing power. It is obviously a very difficult task — in the strict sense of the word an impossible one — for the relative values of money and commodities varied from year to year in ancient times as they do now, and varied still more from century to century. English scholars of the nineteenth century arrived at the conclusion that for working purposes the money of the fourteenth century could be roughly translated into nineteenth century English money by multiplying by fifteen. If this is true, there can be little doubt that, considering the rise in wages and prices and the consequent depreciation in the value of money in the twentieth century, it would be necessary to multiply fourteenth century money by thirty to ascertain its present purchasing value. Americans would have to apply a further multiple to change English pounds into American dollars. This may be roughly taken as five. Undoubtedly the results attained by this process will in some cases seem absurd, but if we compare the wages of English laborers, skilled and unskilled, in the fourteenth century with the wages paid to skilled and unskilled laborers at the present day, it will be seen that the multiples suggested are not greatly exaggerated. Of course it must be borne in mind that the relative costs of commodities are constantly varying, and especially that some things which are now regarded as among the ordinary necessaries of life were in the fourteenth century luxuries attainable only by the very rich. But a record of the wages received by skilled and unskilled laborers and of the prices of some of the commoner objects of purchase will at least enable us to form some idea of the purchasing power of money in Chaucer's day and the amount of labor required to procure the necessaries of life.

An interesting list of wages is given in the account rendered by Chaucer himself in 1391 as clerk of the king's works: to himself as clerk of the works 2 *s.* a day, including Sundays and

holidays; to William Hannay, controller of the works, 12 *d.* a day; to Richard Swift, the king's master carpenter and supervisor of the carpenters, and to Master Henry Yevele, chief mason and supervisor of the masons, 12 *d.* each per day; to Hugh Swayn, purchasing agent for the palace of Westminster and other manors of the king, 2 *s.* a week; to John Pritwell and Peter Cookes, purchasing agents for Westminster, the Tower, and Eltham, 4 *d.* and 3 *d.* per day respectively; to the gardeners of the palaces of Eltham and Shene 3 *d.* a day each; to every mason, carpenter, plumber, tiler, shingler, sawyer, and plasterer 6 *d.* per day; to every glazier 7 *d.*; to every dubber 5 *d.*; to every ditcher and other unskilled workman 4 *d.* per day for each working day. I will add from contemporary documents wages for some forms of service not recorded in Chaucer's accounts: knight, 1 *s.* to 2 *s.*; squire, 1 *s.*; man at arms or archer, 6 *d.*; master of a ship, 6 *d.*; bargemaster, 4 *d.*; common sailors or boatmen, 3 *d.* a day; nurse for one of the earl of Derby's children, 5 marks a year. An ordinary pastry-maker got 6 *d.* a day; but J. Algate, who must have been an artist, was paid 10 *s.* for four days for making "soteltes in paste" for a great feast in 1396.

From the same sources we may take the prices of some articles of common use. The rent of farm lands varied ordinarily between 6 *d.* and 11 *d.* a year per acre. The price of work horses varied between 13 *s.* and 15 *s.*, and horses for the earl of Derby's trumpeters cost only 20 *s.* each; but the price of blooded horses of course ran much higher, sometimes reaching as much as 15 *l.* or 20 *l.* Oxen brought about 15 *s.* each; sheep, 1 *s.* 6 *d.* The normal price for wheat was about 6 *s.* per quarter (14 bushels), that of oats, 4 *s.* to 5 *s.* per quarter. Capons brought 4 *d.*, but hens could be had for 2 *d.*; eggs were normally about ½ *d.* per dozen. Salt was expensive at 6 *s.* 4 *d.* per quarter; candles could be had at 2 *d.* per lb.; soap at 1½ *d.* Cloth varied in price according to its quality: fine linen cloth of Brabant was sold at 20 *d.* per ell; the finest woolen cloth brought about 3 *s.* 6 *d.*; canvas for covering a barge could be had for 2½ *d.* per ell; cotton twine cost a penny a pound. Shoes and boots varied in price: the commonest sort brought 4 *d.* to 6 *d.* a pair; short boots with double soles brought 2 *s.* a pair;

and galoshes 1 *d.* Black straw hats are recorded at 3 *s.* each; their quality is not stated, but they were purchased for members of a ducal household. A surcingle cost 8 *d.* and a double wire chain for greyhounds the same. Shooting gloves were priced at 2 *d.* each, and bowstrings at 6 *d.* a dozen. Hollow tiles for building could be purchased at a penny apiece; wire cost about $\frac{2}{3}$ *d.* a pound and copper $2\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* Gunpowder was naturally very expensive; a 40 lb. box of it cost 40 *s.* Paper, though cheaper than vellum, was still expensive; one pound of waxed paper, bound, is priced at 1 *s.* 4 *d.*; but seven books of grammar, bound in a single volume, were purchased for 4 *s.*

V

THE CANTERBURY TALES

The General Plan

That Chaucer had a general plan for the *Canterbury Tales* is clear, for he states it definitely in the Prologue. To what extent, however, he had decided upon its details we have no means of knowing. Certainly he says nothing about many features of the usual journey to Canterbury that would have offered opportunity for picturesque description or humorous incident. The road from London to Canterbury passed by many places at which pilgrims were accustomed to halt at least momentarily, and it is doubtful whether any group of pilgrims ever traversed the road without being stopped and urged to contribute to one or more of the religious houses situated on or near it. Moreover, the almost contemporary writer of the *Tale of Beryn*, which was intended as a continuation of the *Canterbury Tales*, felt it desirable to give some account of the doings of the pilgrims after they reached Canterbury. But we cannot be sure that Chaucer intended to write about any of these subjects. If this had been his plan, he would probably have given us a more detailed account of the first evening spent by the pilgrims at the Tabard Inn. As it is, he gives us only what is necessary to explain and motivate the arrangement for the telling of the stories. He therefore might have dealt as briefly

with other incidents of the journey even if he had fully completed his plan.

There is some evidence that the scope of his plan did not always remain the same. The Prologue distinctly states that each of the pilgrims is to tell four stories — two on the way to Canterbury and two on the way home. But the language used by the Host in calling upon some of the pilgrims seems to indicate that only one story was expected from each. Scholars who have observed this discrepancy have generally felt that his plan for four tales from each pilgrim was too extensive for him to carry out, and that he consequently reduced it to a single round each way. This is a natural but not a necessary supposition. On the other hand, there is good reason to believe that the Prologue contained some of Chaucer's latest work. If this is true, it is possible that instead of reducing his original plan he really expanded it. It must be remembered that Chaucer's friend, John Gower, was also writing a large collection of tales at the same time, and that he not only planned to produce, but actually did produce, nearly as many tales as were required by Chaucer's most ambitious scheme. It may very well be that when Chaucer saw what Gower had done, he enlarged his original plan of one story from each pilgrim to the arrangement stated in the Prologue. Certainly he did not hesitate to add the 'Canon's Yeoman's Tale' to the number definitely provided for. And the incident of the encounter with the Canon and his man suggests that possibly Chaucer might have introduced other incidents of the road if he had lived to complete his design.

Whatever may have been Chaucer's final plan, it is clear that he did not complete it. The tales as they have come down to us are not a consecutive series but a number of disconnected groups of tales. The number of tales in these groups varies from one to six. The tales within the groups are linked together by narrative and conversation, but the groups are not connected in any way with one another, and the order in which they should be arranged is somewhat uncertain.

Another point upon which there is much uncertainty is the number of days which Chaucer intended the journey to Canterbury to occupy. Some of the older editors believed that only

one day was intended. Of recent years opinion has seemed to favor three days and part of a fourth, but it is by no means certain that this was Chaucer's intention. The allusions in the connecting links make it pretty clear that the journey occupied more than one day, but they do not necessarily call for more than two days. Those who argue in favor of three and a half days emphasize the fact that the tales were told while the pilgrims were riding, and declare that this would have been impossible unless they were riding very slowly, and they cite a number of instances in which three and one half or four days were used in making the journey. On the other hand, it is argued that such slow journeys were exceptional; that the usual rate of travel, even of large parties of people, was more than thirty miles a day; that the plan for having each pilgrim tell two tales on the outward journey and two on the return harmonizes with the supposition that the trip would occupy two days each way; and finally that even if the pilgrims traveled as slowly as three or four miles an hour, they could have completed the journey in two days each way, and their speed would have been no obstacle to the telling or hearing of the tales. Of course, in reality the conception of a group of thirty persons on horseback telling tales as they ride along, though picturesque and poetically justifiable, is entirely unrealistic. Some scholars think that the group was originally smaller, and that when Chaucer enlarged it he forgot that he was creating an impossible situation. But even the smaller group would be too large, and perhaps the mistake is ours, in holding the poet to a strictness of realism that he never intended. After all the Canterbury pilgrimage is not fact, but fiction.

According to a definite statement in line 24 of the Prologue the pilgrims were twenty-nine in number before they were joined by the Host of the Tabard. Difficulty has arisen from the fact that the Prologue actually lists thirty-one including Chaucer himself. Many writers have therefore argued that Chaucer's language in line 24 was not intended to be strictly accurate. Others seem to think that the discrepancy is due to carelessness. My own opinion is that Chaucer intended to be and was strictly accurate in his statement, and that the dis-

crepancy is explained and removed by the proper interpretation of a passage which has given much trouble; cf. notes on I, 164 and VIII, 1 ff.

The Pilgrims — Types or Individuals?

Most students of Chaucer believe that Chaucer intended to bring together in the group of Canterbury pilgrims representatives of all classes of society and of all the principal occupations of his day. They point out that the upper classes are represented by the Knight and the Squire; the Church by the Monk, the Friar, the Prioress, the Second Nun, the Nuns' Priest, the Parish Priest, the Summoner, and the Pardoner; the learned professions by the Man of Law, the Doctor, and the Clerk; commerce and trade by the Merchant, the five city craftsmen, the Shipman, and the Wife of Bath; the laboring classes by the Cook, the Plowman, the Reeve, the Miller, and the Manciple. Undoubtedly the social range and the variety of occupations are very great, but if Chaucer actually planned a systematic representation of all classes and occupations there are some curious omissions. There is no representative of the nobility, or of the highest officials of the Church, such as bishops, abbots, archdeacons, and the like. Moreover, one craft has two representatives, the London Carpenter and the Reeve, who also was a carpenter; one occupation, that of the Manciple, is too insignificant to deserve a place in a representative scheme; and the choice of London tradesmen is obviously not representative, but due to some special motive. At the time when Chaucer was writing, there was a bitter contest for political control of the city between the victualing trades and the non-victualing trades. Chaucer's group contains no representative of the wealthy and powerful victualing trades, while the non-victualing trades chosen are by no means the most wealthy, powerful, and prominent.

Chaucer's family and business associations were with the victualing trades. His father was a vintner, and the collectors of the customs with whom he was associated as controller were prominent members of the most powerful victualing trades. It seems probable, therefore, that his choice of the pilgrims was

determined in part at least, not by schematic, but by personal, considerations. Considerable evidence will be presented later to confirm this supposition. It will appear from this, I think, that while Chaucer no doubt aimed at including a large variety of characters and occupations, he had in mind as models for his pilgrims a large number of persons with whom the circumstances of his social and official life had brought him into personal contact. This of course does not mean that he had not some idea of presenting a broad picture of English life as he knew it, but only that in doing so he was guided, not by a schematic plan, but by his own wide experience of men and social conditions. This supposition seems much more in harmony with what we can infer regarding his genius and the natural and flexible manner in which it expressed itself.

At the same time, it is not necessary to contend that Chaucer had living models for all of his characters, or that he was not profoundly influenced by literary reminiscences and the usual systematic character of mediaeval satire in planning his work.

In character drawing there are in general two methods of procedure, which differ from one another as distinctly as the inductive method differs from the deductive in logic. In the one case, the writer begins by making as complete an assemblage as he can of the abstract qualities belonging to the type of character he wishes to depict, and then attempts, by vivid presentation of these qualities and by giving to them such concrete manifestations as seem logical and appropriate, to create figures that have some semblance of reality and life. In its purest and simplest form this is the method of the character writers of the seventeenth century, and usually that of didactic moralists and satirists in every age. In the other case, the writer, whatever may be his ultimate purpose, selects — consciously or unconsciously — among the persons with whom experience has made him acquainted someone in whom the type which he wishes to present seems to find most characteristic and picturesque embodiment. Sometimes he may fail to find any single person exactly realizing his conception, and he may be obliged to make a composite photograph of two or even more models. But in any event, his portraiture begins with a living model, chosen for the success with which it embodies his con-

ception. This process or method is in general that which has been made use of by those novelists, dramatists, and epic poets whose aim has been primarily creative rather than didactic. Both methods are good. Each at its best has resulted in the production of masterpieces. But the masterpieces of the first method owe their success usually, like caricature, to brilliant exaggeration of striking characteristics.

Examination of Chaucer's portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims discloses a few which clearly belong to the first abstract method, and some which the reader may hesitate to classify, but most of them have generally been recognized as brilliant examples of concrete portraiture. There is obviously nothing individual in the characterization of the five city craftesmen. Indeed Chaucer does not even attempt to describe them separately, but contents himself with enumerating such general characteristics as would be true of the representatives of any of the wealthier gilds. Almost as little individualized is the portrait of the Manciple. Not only does Chaucer give us no visual image of this person, but the mental and moral traits ascribed to him are only those common to all persons of his station and occupation. The Yeoman and the Plowman, despite a certain amount of definite detail of dress and habit, are also artificial constructions. Of the Second Nun we have of course nothing even approaching a portrait, but this lack, combined with the lack of comment on her or her tale, indicates that to Chaucer himself she had no definite form or characteristics and was merely a necessary traveling companion for the Prioress. The Nuns' Priest, on the other hand, though not described in the Prologue, seems, both from the character of the tale ascribed to him and from the glimpses of him, slight as they are, afforded by the conversation between him and the Host, to have been very definitely conceived and visualized.

With regard to three of the pilgrims it is very difficult to make up one's mind. The portraits of the Clerk, the Physician, and the Parson are sufficiently striking, and two at least of them have been much admired, yet there are few if any traits in these portraits which may not be the result of generalization rather than of observation of living models. The Physician's love of gold and lack of interest in the Bible may equally well

be traits characterizing an individual or a class. The portraits of the Clerk and the Parson fulfil all the conventional requirements of the ideal scholar and the ideal parish priest, and the details of both portraits can be abundantly paralleled in literature that was accessible to Chaucer. But none the less, generations of readers have felt the vital charm of these portraits, and it may well be that Chaucer had the good fortune to know men in whom these ideals were actually realized.

But whatever doubts may exist concerning the pilgrims we have just discussed, it may safely be said that in each of the remaining portraits there are features which belong not to a type but to an individual, and which strongly suggest that in drawing them Chaucer was influenced by recollections of persons whom he had seen and known. At so great a distance of time it is obviously difficult to bring much proof of such a statement, but the impression produced by the portraits is strongly corroborated in each case by what we are able to learn from contemporary records.

In the first place it may be noted that Chaucer's whole procedure is calculated, if not to give a record of actual occurrences, at least to give an impression of reality and of scrupulous care in reporting and describing. Not only are we told the exact season of the year at which the pilgrimage occurred, and the precise number of persons who engaged in it, but their place of meeting is specified with unusual care. It is not merely an inn of Southwark, but specifically the Tabard Inn close by the Bell; and as the journey develops, we are even given the name of the innkeeper. When we find fourteenth century documents giving the ownership and the boundaries of the Tabard Inn property (see note on I, 20), and discover also that there actually was a Southwark innkeeper named Harry (or Henry) Bailly (see note on I, 4358), we are the readier to believe that Chaucer may have had living models for those pilgrims whose careers seem specific and individual or who are described in terms that suggest connections with definite places or events. The evidence on this point is given in detail in my recent book, *Some New Light on Chaucer*, and is summarized for each pilgrim in the notes on the portraits of the Prologue; see the notes on the Knight, the Prioress, the Merchant, the

Man of Law, the Franklin, the Wife of Bath, the Reeve, the Miller, and the Pardoner. That there is also realism, of an unascertained, and perhaps unascertainable, degree in the conceptions of the Cook, the Friar, and the Summoner may appear from the notes on I, 4336, and on III, 1265–1300.

In discussing these definite and vital figures I have often spoken as if we could be certain that Chaucer had in each case a definite individual in mind whose portrait he painted with scrupulous accuracy in every detail. I am, however, very far from feeling sure that this was true. It may very well be that in these vivid and lifelike portraits are mingled not only traits from more than a single individual, but even an indeterminate amount of purely imaginative construction. If this were the case, Chaucer would be quite in the tradition and practice of his earliest master, Guillaume de Machaut. Speaking of Machaut's habit of introducing himself as one of the principal characters of his poems, his latest editor, Ernest Hoepffner, says: "The aim which Machaut thus pursued was to give to his poetic fictions a greater air of reality. It is the same desire which incited him to enamel his poems with traits borrowed from real life, with petty detail suited to lend to his inventions the character of something true, something experienced." In any event, the end aimed at by Machaut was certainly achieved, and achieved on a higher plane and in a higher degree, by his follower and greatest pupil, Geoffrey Chaucer.

Earlier Frame Stories

A frame story containing a number of other stories and motivating the telling of them is a common literary device and is of great antiquity. The example best known to modern readers is the collection of Arabian stories known as *The Thousand and One Nights*. This collection, however, was not known to Chaucer. The most famous collections known to men of the Middle Ages were *The Seven Sages* and *The Decamerone* of Boccaccio. Neither of these bears very much resemblance to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and it is not certain that he was indebted to either of them for any of his stories. In the *Seven Sages* a young prince has been condemned

to death on accusations made by his wicked stepmother. The prince cannot speak and defend himself until a certain time has passed. The seven wise men who have been his teachers therefore tell stories each day with the object of inducing the king to postpone the execution of the prince until the time shall arrive when he can speak and defend himself. In reply to them the wicked queen each day tells a story to induce the king to execute the prince immediately. In the *Decamerone*, as is well known, Boccaccio represents a party of young ladies and young gentlemen as fleeing to a country house to escape the dangers of the Black Death which is raging in the city. The young people entertain themselves for ten days by telling stories and, in mediaeval fashion, discussing the moral and social lessons illustrated by them.

Attention has recently been called to another collection of Italian stories written in the fourteenth century, which in plan more nearly resembles Chaucer's than any previously known. This is the collection of *Novelle* by Giovanni Sercambi of Lucca (1347–1424), to which attention was first called by Mr. H. B. Hinkley and which has been fully discussed by Professor Karl Young. The framework of this collection may be outlined as follows: During the ravages of the plague in Lucca in 1374 a number of men and women decide to leave town and visit various shrines in Italy. A sum of money is raised for expenses, a leader is appointed, and arrangements are made for the amusement of the pilgrims on the journey. The entertainments include songs, dances, and the telling of stories. The stories, however, are not told by all the pilgrims, but by Sercambi himself, who has been appointed official story-teller. Professor Young discusses in detail the resemblances of Sercambi's plan and collection to Chaucer's and their differences, and points out that there is no impossibility in the supposition that Chaucer may have met Sercambi on his visit to Italy or may have heard of his collection on the occasion of his second visit. In his published paper Professor Young writes: "We may fairly conclude that, however much of Chaucer's plan may have been derived from the poet's actual observation and actual experience — on the road between London and Canterbury, or on the road elsewhere — the most likely of all literary sources

is to be found in the *Novelle* of Giovanni Sercambi." There is, however, no real evidence that Chaucer ever met Sercambi or heard of his *Novelle*, and there seems to be no instance in which he is indebted to Sercambi for any of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Another frame story sometimes mentioned in connection with the *Canterbury Tales* is the *Confessio Amantis* of Chaucer's friend John Gower. As it is nearly twice as long (c. 34,000 lines) as the uncompleted *Canterbury Tales*, and as it was apparently completed by 1390, the conception of it may possibly have antedated that of Chaucer's great work. My own belief — for which I find some support, though no real evidence, in the writings of the two men — is that both the title and the subject of Gower's poem were suggested by, though not imitated from, the poem which Chaucer refers to as the *Seintes Legende of Cupide* (commonly called the *Legende of Good Women*). This poem, I believe, gave to Gower the idea of applying the terms and forms of the confessional to the traditional body of tales from Ovidian and other sources, just as Chaucer had represented women faithful in love as saints and martyrs. Certainly the *Confessio Amantis* bears distinct traces of the influence of Chaucer's *Legende*.

Whether Gower's plan became known to Chaucer, and in turn set him to devising the plan of the *Canterbury Tales*, can probably never be determined. We have no certain knowledge when Chaucer first conceived his plan or even when he first began to execute it. And we do not know that Chaucer ever read the *Confessio Amantis* through, though we can be fairly certain that he had heard of it and knew something about its contents.

Since it is highly probable that Chaucer had begun to form the *Canterbury Tales* and had even written some new tales for the collection before 1390, it is entirely possible that Gower had heard of it or even seen it and that in the well-known lines in which he represents Venus as instructing him to order Chaucer to put an end to his career as an amatory poet by writing his "Testament of Love," he wished to express his disapproval of such frivolities as the *Canterbury Tales* were sure to contain. If so, we can readily understand the dig which Chaucer gave him in the 'Man of Law's Prologue.'

In any event, only the barest impulse to make a large collec-

tion of stories could have come to Chaucer from Gower's example, for the *Confessio Amantis* is structurally not in the least like the *Canterbury Tales*. There is no assembly of persons of different classes and characters as tellers of the tales, and the tales are told, not for amusement or general instruction, but as *exempla* to illustrate various vices and virtues. Consequently many of the tales are told with the brevity of a bare outline and even those that are told at greater length are cast in the *exemplum* mold.

Beyond question Chaucer's design for the *Canterbury Tales* is so different from any frame story of earlier date that, even if he had known them all, his originality would have been equally evident.

The Order of the Tales

The order of the *Canterbury Tales* established by the Chaucer Society and since adopted by most editors is not that of any of the manuscripts. It was based upon the assumption that although Chaucer had not finished writing all the tales called for by his plan, he had at least definitely settled upon the details of the plan and had brought all the parts that he had written into harmony with it. A minute study of cross-references, allusions to the time of day and to places on the road, would therefore enable the student to recover from the jumbled order in the manuscripts the order finally intended by Chaucer.

But these assumptions are very far from being true. There is a good deal of evidence that Chaucer had not made final decisions upon several of the extant fragments of his plan. It is generally admitted that several passages in the text belong to earlier stages of his work and are out of harmony with his latest intentions. Certain lines near the beginning of the 'Shipman's Tale' are witnesses to an earlier intention of assigning that tale to some woman, just as the Second Nun's allusion to herself as an unworthy son of Eve indicates that her tale had not been properly revised to suit its teller. The clear implication of the words of the Man of Law is that his tale was to be in prose. These facts are now generally admitted, but it is

not so commonly admitted that some of the allusions to time and to places on the road may also represent, not Chaucer's latest intention, but an earlier plan. Yet all students have been troubled by the discrepancy in time indications between the prologue of the Manciple and that of the Parson; for if the 'Parson's Tale' immediately followed the Manciple's, it cannot have been morning when the Manciple began his tale and four in the afternoon when he finished it. With these evidences that the statements in the links do not always represent Chaucer's latest intentions, one is justified in doubting whether the reference to Rochester in the words of the Host to the Monk warrants the removal of the fragment in which they occur to a position which it does not occupy in any of the manuscripts and the adoption in the end-link of the 'Man of Law's Tale' of the reading of a manuscript which can hardly be believed to represent a direct line of transmission from Chaucer. It is not even safe to infer that the Prologue, masterly though it is, would have received no revision had Chaucer lived to complete his plan. On one point indeed — the number of tales to be told — there is pretty general agreement that it does not represent his latest intentions. Some reasons have been given above, p. 68, which suggest that it would be rash to assume that the Prologue represents the earlier plan. But even if the Prologue is in the main one of the latest pieces that was written we have no right to assume that it had received final revision.

If we allow force to these considerations we shall be better able to deal with such problems as that of the "preestes three" (see pp. 507f.); the identity of the pilgrim whose tale was to follow that of the Man of Law (see pp. 570f.); and the puzzling links which seem undoubtedly genuine but are out of harmony with other parts of the text (see pp. 596 and 646).

There is much disagreement among the manuscripts in the order of the tales, but the conditions are, I think, not so chaotic as is usually assumed. The majority of the manuscripts point to two genuine types of arrangement, deviations from which are probably to be explained in part by the shifting from one exemplar to another in copying the manuscript, partly by accidental disarrangements of quires either in the extant manu-

script or in some ancestor, and in a few instances perhaps by causes which it is now impossible to ascertain.

In order to study the problem of arrangement we may adopt provisionally the designations of the groups established by the Chaucer Society. The tales themselves will be represented by abbreviations. The bits of interspersed conversation between the pilgrims will be called "links." Those that relate only to the preceding tale will be called "end-links"; those that relate to the following tale will be called "head-links." It will be seen that we really have ten fragments, continuous and connected within themselves, but not connected one to another. These fragments were called groups by the Chaucer Society and designated by the letters of the alphabet:

Group A: Prol, Kn T, link, Mil T, link, Re T, link, Ck T (unfinished)
Group B^1: M L head-link, M L T, M L end-link
Group B^2: Ship T, link, Pri T, link, Sir Tho, link, Mel, link, Mo T, link, N P T
Group C: Doc T, link, Pard T
Group D: W B T, link, Fri T, link, Sum T
Group E: Cl head-link, Cl T, link, Merch T
Group F: Sq head-link, Sq T, link, Fran T
Group G: Sec N T, link, C Y T
Group H: Manc head-link, Manc T
Group I: Pars head-link, Pars T

The two types of arrangement spoken of above are as follows:

Class I: A B^1 D E F C B^2 G H I.

Nine manuscripts [1] have this order, with no essential variation. They are El, Gg (imperfect at end), Dd, Ds, En^1, Ad^1, En^3, Ma^1, Cn. Bo^2 has the same order except that H has been placed before G and I has been lost. Ha^5 and Ad^3 seem to have been derived from a manuscript belonging to this class which had by some accident placed G^1 (Sec N T) between D and E; and further changes have occurred in each of the two manuscripts. Ha^5 has lost all the tales after C and has

[1] For the Key to MSS abbreviations, see pp. 87f., below.

inserted a spurious link between F and C. Ad^3, though complete, has suffered a misplacement of Ck T and the link preceding it between H and G. Bo^1 was copied from a manuscript of this class as far as E^1 (Cl T); from there on it was copied from a manuscript of Class IIa, and therefore it lacks E^2 (Merch T), F^1 (Sq T). Ph^2 is a twin of Bo^1. Ha^4, on the other hand, belongs to Class IIc through B^1; then through D, E, and F it belongs to Class I; then it becomes Class IIc again. Ad^2 is very imperfect, the order of elements being A, B^1, D, C, E, B^2, but it obviously belongs to Class I, having suffered a disarrangement of the last three elements. There are thus sixteen manuscripts which establish with varying degrees of certainty the existence of this as a typical order.

Three of the manuscripts of Class I — Dd, Ds, and En^1 — have at the end of N P T a passage of sixteen lines intended to connect it with some other tale. These lines, commonly called the Nuns' Priest's End-Link, are Chaucerian in manner and are regarded by many scholars as genuine. Four other manuscripts — Ad^1, En^3, Ma^1, and Cn — have not only these sixteen lines but six additional ones which are undoubtedly spurious. (For the text of these lines see the Notes, p. 646.) Gg has lost leaves at this point. It may be noted that none of the manuscripts of this class contains the lines known as the Man of Law's End-Link (see Notes, p. 571).

The manuscripts of Class II fall into three subclasses:

Class IIa: A B^1 — F^1 E^2 D E^1 F^2 G C B^2 H I.

Seven practically complete MSS[1] have this arrangement — Ha^3, Hl, Lc, Ln, Ne, Py, Cx^1. Six other MSS — Tc^2, Nl, Rw^3, Tc^1, Mc and Rw^1 — clearly belong to this class but are disarranged or defective toward the end. The dash between B^1 and F^1 represents the link joining M L T to Sq T. It is found in 27 MSS — all but Nl of Class IIa, all of IIb, and all but Ht of IIc. It does not occur in any MS of Class I or in any of the eight unclassifiable MSS. Four MSS of Class IIa (Ln, Py, Rw^3, Mc) and one hybrid of Class IIc (Ry^1) read *sompnour* in l. 1179, where the other MSS read *squier* (varieties

[1] For the purposes of this inquiry the two Caxton editions (Cx^1 and Cx^2) are treated as manuscripts.

of spelling are disregarded). Six manuscripts belonging more or less perfectly to this class also connect F^1 with E^2 by a modified form of the Squire-Franklin Link, changing the word *Franklin* to *Merchant*. These are Ln, Py, Lc, Nl, Rw^3, Tc^1. Only three MSS of this class have spurious links. Mc and Rw^1 have a 4-line link between A and B^1; Py a 14-line link between G and C.

Class IIb: A X B^1–F^1 D E^1 E^2 F^2 G C B^2 H I.

In this series X represents the *Tale of Gamelyn*. The arrangement is practically the same as that of IIa except that the position of E^2 has been shifted. Three manuscripts belong to this group: Cp, Sl^2, and La. La has three spurious links.

Class IIc: A a X B^1–F^1–E^2 D E^1 g F^2 G f C e B^2 H I.

Here as before X represents the *Tale of Gamelyn;* a represents a spurious two-line link; the hyphens represent modifications of genuine links; g represents a spurious seven-line head-link, f and e spurious links of fourteen and twelve lines respectively. Seven manuscripts conform closely to this scheme: Ba, En^2, Ha^2, Ld^2, Mg, Ry^2, Sl^1. Eight others — Ry^1, Fi, Ii, Rw^2, Ht, Pw, Mm, Gl — clearly belong to the group but show more or less derangement of the original plan.

Very Irregular Manuscripts. — Eight manuscripts — Ch, Ld^1, To, Hg, Hk, Pa, Cx^2, Se — are so very irregular in arrangement as to defy classification, but it is obvious that in each case we have to do with a derangement based upon a shifting of the exemplar or some accidental shifting of quires in the manuscript itself or one of its ancestors.

The Original Order. — It appears that the fundamental differences between Classes I and II are due to different treatments of four elements and the presence or absence of spurious links. The four erratic elements are F^1 (Sq T), E^2 (Mer T), G (Sec N–C Y), and the *Tale of Gamelyn*. Assume the existence of a manuscript made up as follows: A B^1 D E^1 F^2 G C B^2 H I. Assume further the discovery among Chaucer's papers of copies of the erratic elements just mentioned. It would then be easy to understand how one copyist made up what he regarded as a

complete manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* by rejecting *Gamelyn* and introducing E^2 and F^1 at the positions indicated by their accompanying links; while another copyist, conforming to the indications of Man of Law's End-Link, placed Sq T there, accompanying it for some unknown reason by Mer T. The first of these hypothetical copyists would have produced the basic form of Class I, the second the basic form of Class II. Later, perhaps, *Gamelyn* was inserted, thus giving Class II c. But it is possible, though not probable, that *Gamelyn* was in the second basic form and was later dropped, thus giving rise to Class II a. Variations were produced by the introduction of a greater or less number of spurious links, a practice which can be clearly and unmistakably observed in study of the manuscripts. In later copying, contaminations of all sorts and degrees undoubtedly occurred, but they do not disguise the existence of the two basic arrangements here set forth.

Cook-Gamelyn Links

Twelve manuscripts all showing the same general arrangement of the fragments possess a two-line link connecting the *Cook's Tale* and *Gamelyn:*

> But here of I wol passe as now
> And of yonge Gamelyn I wol telle yow

These manuscripts are Bw, En^2, Fi, Gl, Ii, Ld^2, Lc, Mm, Mg, Pw, Ry^2, Sl^1. Ht also connects Ck T and *Gamelyn* by this link but places them after the tale of the Man of Law.

A single manuscript, La, has a four-line link between Ck T and *Gamelyn* which is not found in any other manuscript.

Nine other manuscripts contain the *Gamelyn* but have no connecting link. These are Ch, Cp, Ha^2, Ha^4, La^1, Rw^2, Ry^1, Sl^2, and To, but it is to be noted that in Ha^2 leaves are missing at this point and that it probably originally contained the two-line link. In Rw^2 the position of *Gamelyn* is shifted so that it comes between the tales of the Merchant and the Wife of Bath.

Man of Law's End-Link

This passage, though not in El or any other manuscript of Class I, is undoubtedly genuine. It is therefore given, with

comments, in the Notes, see pp. 570–74. Details concerning the manuscripts that contain the passage will be found on pp. 570–72.

"The Stag of an Hert"

Between Parts One and Two of the 'Squire's Tale' eight manuscripts — Cp, Gl, Ha^2, Lc, Mg, Mm, Pw, Ry^2 — have the mysterious inscription "The Stag of an Hert." No one has yet suggested a satisfactory explanation of this, but it obviously indicates some sort of relation among these manuscripts at this point.

One readily conjectures that the words conceal the name of the scribe. The manuscripts are not in the same hand, but the inscription may have had significance only for the manuscript in which it first appeared.

The Squire-Merchant Link

In twenty-one of the manuscripts which place Merch T immediately after Sq T, the two tales are joined by the lines commonly known as the Squire-Franklin Link, beginning:

In feith Squier thow hast the wel yquit.

Naturally the word "Franklin" is replaced by "Marchaunt." The complete list of manuscripts having this arrangement is Bw, En^2, Fi, Gl, Ha^2, Hg, Ht, Ii, Ld^2, Lc, Ln, Mm, Mg, Nl, Pw, Py, Rw^2, Rw^3, Ry^2, Sl^1, Tc^1. In Rw^3 Fran T actually follows, but it is ascribed in the heading to the Merchant. It will be observed that only two of the manuscripts which have this arrangement (Hg and Nl) are absent from the list of those which use the Man of Law's End-Link for introducing Sq T; but ten manuscripts of that list do not make use of the modified Squire-Franklin Link to introduce Merch T. These are Cp, Ha^3, Ha^4, He, La, Ne, Rw^1, Ry^1, Sl^2, Tc^2.

Spurious Squire-Wife Link

The manuscripts Cp, La, and Sl^2 place W B T immediately after Sq T, but La is unique in linking the tales. The link consists of twelve lines, undoubtedly spurious; as they appear in only one MS they are not worth quoting.

Spurious Merchant-Wife Link

Three closely related manuscripts, Bw, Ld², Ry², connect the tales of the Merchant and the Wife of Bath by a spurious link of sixteen lines:

Oure Ost gan tho to loke vp anoon
Gode men quod he herkenyth euerychon
As euer I mote drynke wyn or ale
This marchant hath Itole a mery tale
How Ianuarie hade a lether Iape
His wif put in his hoode an ape
But here of I wil leue of as nowe
Dame wif of bath quod he I pray yow
Telle vs a tale now next aftir this
Sir ost quod she so god my soule blis
As I fully therto wil consente
And fully it is myn holly entente
To don yow alle disport that I can
But holdith me excused I am a woman
I con not rehersen as thise clerkes can
And right a non she hath hir tale bygune

Spurious Clerk-Franklin Link

Two stanzas of seven lines each occur in eight manuscripts of Class IIc as a link between the tales of the Clerk and the Franklin:

I haue a wyf quod oure Ost though she pore be
Yit hath she an heep of vices lo
For of hir tonge a moche shrewe is she
For to my wille the contrary wol she do
Therof no force lat alle suche thinges go
But wite ye what in counsail be it said
Me reweth sore that I am to hir tayd

Sire Frankeleyn cometh nere zif it youre wil be
And say vs a tale as ye are a gentilman
It shal be don trewely host quod he
I wol you telle as hertely as I can
Holdeth me excused though I vnworthy am
To telle you a tale for I wol Not rebell
Azeinst youre wille a tale now wol I telle.

Both stanzas are spurious, although most of the lines of the first are genuine Chaucerian lines, but the rhymes of ll. 2, 4, and 5 indicate that the combination belongs to the fifteenth century. The manuscripts containing these lines are Bw, Ha^2, Ld^2, Lc, Mg, Ry^2, Sl^1. En^2 probably once contained them, but leaves have been lost at this point. The lines are also found exceptionally in the very irregular manuscript Nl.

Four manuscripts, Fi, Hg, Ht, and Ii place the Fran T after the Merch T. In Fi the tales are connected by the spurious link just quoted. In the other three manuscripts they are linked by the eight genuine lines commonly known as the Squire's Head-Link (F 1–8), with a substitution of the name "Franklin" for "Squire."

Spurious Pardoner-Shipman Links

Most of the manuscripts of Class IIc contain a spurious twelve-line link uniting the tales of the Pardoner and the Shipman. The lines are:

> Now frendes saide oure hoost so dere
> How liketh you by John the pardonere
> For he hath vnbokeled wel the male
> He hath vs tolde right a thrifty tale
> As touchyng of mysgovernaunce
> I pray to god yeue him goode chaunce
> As ye han herde of thise Riotours thre
> Now gentil maryner hertely I pray the
> Telle vs a good tale and that right anon
> It shal be don by god and by seynt John
> Seyde this maryner as wel as euer I can
> And right anoon his tale thus he bigan.

The manuscripts in question are Bw, En^2, Fi, Ha^2, Ii, Ld^2, Lc, Mo, Rw^2, Ry^2, Sl^1. Bo^1, a hybrid of Classes I and IIc, also contains these lines. Owing probably to a disarrangement of leaves, the lines occur in three manuscripts — Pw, Mm, and Gl — between *Gamelyn* and Ship T, which has been moved up to this point. For a similar reason they occur in Ht between Cl T and Ship T.

Manuscript La again is unique in possessing a spurious six-

line link which connects the tales of the Pardoner and the Shipman.

Spurious Canon's Yeoman-Doctor Links

A link of seven spurious couplets occurs in fourteen manuscripts of Group II b between the tales of the Canon's Yeoman and the Doctor. The manuscripts are Bw, Bo[1], En[2], Fi, Ht, Ii, Ld[2], Lc, Mm, Mg, Rw[2], Ry[1], Ry[2], Sl[2]. They also occur in Bo[1], Py, and Se — hybrids all — and would probably occur in Ha[2] if leaves had not been lost at this point. The lines read as follows:

Whan that this yoman his tale ended hadde
Of this fals Chanon whiche that was so badde
Oure host gan seye trewely and certain
This preest was bigiled sothly forto sayn
He wenynge forto be a philosophre
Til he right no gold lefte in his cofre
And sothly this preest hadde a luder iape
This cursed Chanon putte in his hood an ape
But al this passe I ouer as now
Sir doctour of physik I pray you
Tell vs a tale of som honest matere
It shal be don yif that ye wole it here
Saide this doctoure and his tale began anon
Now goode men quod he herkeneth euerychon.

Manuscript La, exceptional in so many respects, contains instead of these lines a sixteen-line link which is undoubtedly spurious.

KEY TO MANUSCRIPTS

(Fragments and single tales are excluded.)

Additionals 5140 (B.M. = British Museum) [Askew 2]	Ad[1]
Additionals 25718 (B.M.)	Ad[2]
Additionals 35286 (B.M.) [Ashburnham 125]	Ad[3]
Barlow 20 (Bodl. = Bodleian Library, Oxford)	Bw
Bodley 414 (Bodl.)	Bo[1]
Bodley 686 (Bodl.)	Bo[2]
Cardigan (George Brudenell, Esq.)	Cn
Christ Church 152 (Oxf.)	Ch

Caxton (printed c. 1478[?])	Cx^1	
Caxton (printed c. 1484[?])	Cx^2	
Corpus Christi Coll. 196 (Oxford)	Cp	Co
Dd. 4.24 (Cambridge University Library)	Dd	
Delamere (Lord Delamere) [Cholmondeley]	Dl	
Devonshire (Duke of Devonshire) [Le Strange]	Ds	
Egerton 2726 (B.M.) [Haistwell]	En^1	Hai
Egerton 2863 (B.M.) [Hodson-Norton]	En^2	
Egerton 2864 (B.M.) [Askew 1, Hodson-Ingleby]	En^3	
Ellesmere (Huntington Library, Calif.)	El	E
Fitzwilliam (Fitzwilliam Museum, Camb.) [Ashb. 127]	Fi	
Gg. 4.27 (Cambridge University Library)	Gg	
Glasgow V, i, 1 (Hunterian Museum)	Gl	
Harley 1758 (B.M.)	Ha^2	
Harley 7333 (B.M.)	Ha^3	
Harley 7334 (B.M.)	Ha^4	
Harley 7335 (B.M.)	Ha^5	
Hatton Donat 1 (Bodl.)	Ht	
Helmingham (Lord Tollemache)	Hl	
Hengwrt 154 (Nat. Lib. of Wales, Aberystwith)	Hg	
Holkham (the Earl of Leicester)	Hk	
Ii. 3.26 (Cambridge University Library)	Ii	
Lansdowne 851 (B.M.) [Webb]	La	
Laud 600 (Bodleian)	Ld^1	
Laud 739 (Bodleian)	Ld^2	
Lichfield (Cathedral)	Lc	
Lincoln (Cathedral)	Ln	
Manchester Eng. 113 (John Rylands Lib.) [Hodson 39]	Ma^1	
McCormick (Sir William McCormick) [Ashburnham 126]	Mc	
Mm. 2.5 (Cambridge University Library) [Ely]	Mm	
Morgan (Morgan Library, New York) [Ashburnham 124]	Mg	
New Coll. D 314 (Oxford)	Ne	
Northumberland (Duke of Northumberland) [Mrs. Thynne]	Nl	
Paris fonds angl. 39 (Bib. nat., Paris)	Pa	
Petworth (Lord Leconfield)	Pw	
Phillipps 6570[1] (Dr. A. W. Rosenbach)	Ph^1	
Phillipps 8136 " " " " [Canby]	Ph^2	

[1] Ph^1 is fragmentary (24 written leaves).

Phillipps 8137 (Dr. A. W. Rosenbach)	Ph^3
Physicians (College of, London)	Py
Rawlinson Poetry 141 (Bodl.)	Rw^1
Rawlinson Poetry 149 (Bodl.)	Rw^2
Rawlinson Poetry 223 (Bodl.)	Rw^3
Royal 17 D xv (B.M.)	Ry^1
Royal 18 C ii (B.M.)	Ry^2
Arch. Selden B. 14 (Bodl.)	Se
Sloane 1685 (B.M.)	Sl^1
Sloane 1686 (B.M.)	Sl^2
Trinity Coll. 49 (Oxf.)	To
Trinity Coll. R 3, 3 (Camb.)	Tc^1
Trinity Coll. R 3, 15 (Camb.)	Tc^2

VI

THE LANGUAGE OF CHAUCER

The language of Chaucer is interesting and important, both because it is the form of English written by one of the greatest writers who ever used our language and because it lies, in time and in stage of development, about half way between the English of Alfred the Great (Anglo-Saxon) and that of our own time. It is of course a mistake to suppose that Chaucer created the English language or indeed that he made any very radical changes in it. No man could perform such miracles. He was a Londoner who associated with the classes of people who spoke the best English of his day; and he wrote very much as they spoke — allowing for differences between spoken and written language.

His English is not bookish; it is rather the language of good society, with occasional use of colloquialisms, slang, and a few expressions not permitted in the speech of gentlemen and ladies. His sentences are in general well constructed and clear. Now and then they are not. Sometimes this is due to his reproduction of the freedom and looseness of conversation; sometimes he seems to have begun a sentence in one way and finished it in another, because of carelessness.

That he wrote in English at all is rather astonishing. He

belonged to the Court circle and wrote mainly for its members. Although the English language was in his day displacing French in the schools, and gaining ascendency in the upper classes, French appears to have been still the language written, and probably spoken, by the aristocracy. They read the literature of France; and Englishmen who wrote for them usually wrote in French. Chaucer's contemporary and friend, John Gower, wrote in French the works he wished to be read by gentlemen and ladies; when he wished to appeal to scholars, he wrote in Latin; he seems not to have written in English until Chaucer had established English as a language worth writing in. Chaucer is not the first English poet, as some writers have said; there were many who wrote interestingly before he did. But he was the first writer to give the English language prestige as a medium for the best that could be thought or said.

The English of London in Chaucer's day was not uniform. A few centuries earlier the speech of London was altogether a southern form of English. But London was the metropolis, and to it came people from all parts of England. As the population north of London was greater than that south of it, northern usages and pronunciations gradually crept into the speech of London.

The grammar of past forms of speech we can easily determine and discuss; it appears in the writings. But the pronunciation has disappeared; we can ascertain it only with great labor and difficulty, and even then only approximately. Still it is astonishing how much we can find out with patience and ingenuity, and we are getting steadily nearer to the reality. If Chaucer could hear a good student read his poetry, the pronunciation would probably seem like that of a foreigner, but he would, we hope, be able to understand what he heard. At any rate, to read his poetry with the pronunciation established by scholars makes possible the maintenance of a uniform tone and atmosphere, whereas the pronunciation of it as modern English, with an occasional extra syllable, makes it sound like the babbling of a child, or like a rustic dialect. But Chaucer was not a child, and the people for whom he wrote were equal in culture, intelligence, and sophistication to the best people of our own time.

The conventional pronunciation is not hard to learn. Most pronunciations are decided by the spelling. Doubtful sounds can be determined by their derivations from OE (Old English) or by their descendants in PE (Present English).

1. The Pronunciation of Vowels and Diphthongs

Sound	*Pronunciation*	*Spelling*	*Examples*
ā	like *a* in *father*	a, aa	bathed, caas
a	like *a* in *Colorado*	a	whan, that
ē	like *a* in *mate*	e, ee	swete, sweete
ę̄	like *e* in *there*	e, ee	ech, heeth
e	like *e* in *set*	e	tendre
ī, ȳ	like *i* in *machine*	i, y	shires, ryde
i, y	like *i* in *bit*	i, y	riden, (*pret.*), hym
ō	like *o* in *note*	o, oo	gode, goode
ǭ	like *o* in *broad*	o, oo	holy, hooly
o	like *o* in *for*	o	oft, flok
ū	like *oo* in *boot*	ou, ow	flour, fowles
u	like *u* in *full*	u, o	but, yonge, bot
iū	like *u* in *mute*	u	vertu, Pruce
ə	like *a* in *about*	e	name, finde
ę̄i	like ę̄ + i	ai, ei, ay, ey	batailles, feith, day, wey
au	like *ou* in *out*	au, aw	saugh, sawe, cause
eu	like *e* + u	eu, ew	reule, newe
oi	like *oy* in *boy*	oi, oy	poison, coy
ǭu	like ǭ + u	o, ou, ow	foghte, foughte, sowle

2. The modern English sounds given to indicate the pronunciation of Chaucer's ē, ī, ō, and ū are only approximately accurate, for these modern English sounds are not pure vowels, as we are accustomed to suppose, but diphthongs. The Chaucerian sounds were probably pure vowels, like the corresponding vowels in modern German and Italian.

3. The following Chaucerian spellings require special attention: The spelling *oo* indicates merely that the vowel is long, and should not be pronounced like *oo* in modern *boot* or *good*. The spelling *o* usually represents an *o* sound, but in some words it represents the sound of *u* in *full*. These words can nearly always be recognized by the fact that in PE they are pronounced with the vowel sound in *sun, son, young*.

4. The spelling *ou, ow*, usually represents a simple vowel,

sounded like *oo* in *boot*. Words belonging to this class have in PE the diphthong found in *house*, *sound*, *now*.

5. Some scholars teach that *ai*, *ay*, *ei*, *ey* should be pronounced like *ai* in modern *aisle*, but the weight of evidence seems to me to be against this. The proper sound can be secured by slightly prolonging and emphasizing the second element of the diphthong heard in modern *way*, *they*.

6. The unaccented final *e*, the sound of which is indicated above by the unaccented *a* of *about*, is of course approximately the same as the final unaccented *e* in such a German word as *gabe*, or as *a* in *China*.

Consonants

7. In general the consonants are pronounced in Chaucer as they are in PE, but the following remarks are to be noted:

c before *a*, *o*, or *u* is like *k*
c before *e*, *i*, or *y* is like *s*
ch is *always* like *tch*
g before *a*, *o*, and *u* is like *g* in *go*
g before *e* and *i* is like *g* in *gem*
gg is usually like *dg*, as in *juggen;* but in *frogges*, *legges*, *bigger*, it has the same sound as in PE. The sound in PE is a safe guide.
gh is like German *ch* in *ich*, *doch*
ng is like *ng* in *finger*
r is trilled
s is pronounced like *s*, not *z*, except between vowels
th is pronounced like *th* in *thin*, except between vowels, when it is like *th* in *then*.
h is silent in words of French origin, as *honour*, and in native words, like *he*, *him*, *hire*, *hadde*, when they are not emphatic.

Relations of ME to OE and PE

8. In general the sounds of ME have developed very regularly and consistently into PE, and therefore a few simple rules can be given which will help greatly in ascertaining the proper pronunciation of many words in Chaucer.

9. If in PE the vowel *a* is pronounced as in *name*, *same*, the vowel in the corresponding ME word is to be pronounced with *ā* as in *father*.

10. Chaucer's spelling does not distinguish between the two

qualities of $\bar{e}$, but the fact that he rarely rhymes the two classes of words with each other shows that he pronounced them differently. PE does not furnish any test for classifying all such words, but some help is given by the fact that words spelled in Modern English with *ea* were pronounced by Chaucer with the open sound $\bar{\varepsilon}$, as *heath, breathe, each.*

11. In like manner Chaucer made no distinction in spelling between the two classes of words in $\bar{o}$. PE helps to distinguish them by the fact that those which had the open sound $\bar{o}$ in ME are now pronounced with $\bar{o}$, as *holy, stone, go;* while those which had the close $\bar{o}$ are now pronounced with a *u* sound (long or short): *do, good, hood, room.*

12. The student who knows OE can usually determine the quality of *ee* ($\bar{e}$) and *oo* ($\bar{a}$) by the following rules:

ee or *e* represents $\bar{e}$ in ME if in OE the vowel was $\bar{e}$ or $\bar{e}o$

ee or represents $\bar{\varepsilon}$ in ME if in OE the vowel was $\bar{e}a$, $\bar{æ}$, or *e* in an open syllable

oo or *o* represents $\bar{o}$ in ME if in OE the vowel was $\bar{o}$

oo or *o* represents $\bar{ọ}$ in ME if in OE the vowel was $\bar{a}$ or *o* in an open syllable

An open syllable is one that ends in a vowel. In words of two or more syllables a single consonant between vowels belongs with the second vowel; thus in OE in *nama, mete, stolen,* the vowels *a, e,* and *o* are in open syllables.

Word Accent

13. In words of native origin, and other words introduced into the language before the Conquest, the principal stress is on the root syllable, which is usually the first syllable of the word, unless there is a prefix.

14. Words derived from French kept for a time the original French accent, which was usually on the last syllable not counting unstressed final *e;* thus *re soun′, co ra′ ge, ho nour′.* But the English tendency to throw the accent toward the beginning of the word began early to operate, and resulted in giving to some words an accent on the first syllable and allowing others to be accented in either of two ways; thus, *chi″ val ry′ e, chi′ val ri″ e,* and either *ho nour′* or *ho′ nour.* The

same tendency gives us, in the twentieth century, *chauffeur'* and *chauf' fer*. Most words from Old French ending in *ie* or *ye* have either a primary or a secondary accent on the *i* or *y*, as *compaigny'e*, *curteisi'e*, but a few words treat the *ie* or *ye* as a single syllable and have the accent on the preceding syllable. Such are: *consisto'rie*, *glo'rie*, *sto'rie*, *offerto'rie*, *orato'rie*, *parito'rie*, *purgato'rie*, *stillato'rie*, *victo'rye*, *memo'rie*, *come'die*, *trage'dye*, *mercu'rie*, *porfu'rie*, and all words in *arye* except *Tartary'e*.

INFLECTIONS

Nouns

15. By Chaucer's time the elaborate system of OE inflections had almost entirely disappeared, and the inflections had become almost as few and simple as they are in PE. Masculines, feminines, and neuters were all inflected in the same way. In the singular there were only two regular forms, one for the nominative and objective (or accusative), another, *es*, for the genitive. In the plural the form *es* served for all cases.

16. Besides these regular forms an old dative ending in *e* was preserved in a number of crystallized phrases, as *to grounde*, *in londe*, *on fyre*. PE *alive*, as contrasted with *in life*, originated in such a phrase.

17. A few words belonging to the OE weak declension show in Chaucer a genitive singular like the nominative: *cherche*, *herte*, *lady*, *sonne*.

18. Some nouns of the neuter gender in OE have the same form for the plural as the singular: *deer*, *folk* (also *folkes*), *hors*, *sheep*, and, less regularly, *yeer*, *thing*, and *winter*.

19. Some nouns form their plurals by change of the root vowel: *man, men; foot, feet; goos, gees; tooth, teeth*.

20. A few plurals in *n*, or *en*, are either derived from OE *n*-stems or imitated from them: *asshen* (also *asshes*), *been* (also *bees*), *foon* (also *foos*), *hosen* (also *hoses*), *pesen*, *shoon*, *toon* (also *toos*) and *oxen*, *yen*, *brethren*, *sustren* (also *sustres*), *doughtren* (also *doughtres*).

21. Names of relationship ending in *er* sometimes have a genitive singular like the nominative: *fader*, *suster*.

22. Nouns of French origin are in general inflected like

those of native origin, but a few monosyllables ending in *s* have the same form in the plural as in the singular: *cas*, *paas*, *vers*. A few also show no inflectional ending in the genitive, as *your heritage right*, *the rose color*.

23. Some words of French origin, especially those ending in *n* or *nt*, sometimes make the plural by adding *s* instead of *es*. Occasionally *z* is written instead of *s*: *instrumentz*.

Adjectives

24. Some adjectives as well as some nouns end in unaccented *e;* for example, *swete*, *grene*, *straunge*, *nyce*. Such adjectives have the same form under all circumstances, except that the final *e* is usually not pronounced in adjectives of more than two syllables.

25. Other adjectives — that is, those which have no final *e* in the basal form — are inflected in two ways:

1. They take *e* in the plural; that is, *good*, plural *goode;* *yong*, plural *yonge*.

2. The definite form takes *e* in both the singular and the plural; thus, *the yonge sonne*, *the hoote somer*.

26. The definite form of the adjective is used as follows: (*a*) When it is preceded by the definite article or a possessive or demonstrative adjective: *the hoote somer*, *his halfe cours*, *this goode man*. (*b*) After a noun in the genitive case: *Epicurus owene sone*. (*c*) In vocatives: *O stronge god; welcome*, *faire fresshe May*. When the adjective follows the noun it remains uninflected: *Mercy*, *lady bright*. (*d*) Adjectives with proper names seem sometimes to take an inflectional *e* even when not preceded by a demonstrative; for example, *faire Venus*, *goode fayre Whyt*.

27. A relic of the old genitive plural is preserved in *aller* (also *alder*, *alther*): *oure aller cost; alderbest* (best of all).

28. A few instances of Old French plurals in *es* occur: *goodes temporeles*, *romances that been roiales*, *places delitables*.

29. The comparison of adjectives in ME is much the same as in PE. The comparative and superlative are formed either by adding *er* and *est* or by using *more* and *most*. Superlatives usually end in *este* if a primary or secondary accent falls on the *est*.

30. The irregularly compared adjectives *good*, *bad*, and *muche* offer no special peculiarities. *Fer* has the comparative *ferre*, superlative *ferreste*. *Neigh*, *ny* has comparative *neer;* superlative *next(e)*. *Dere* has the contracted comparative *derre*.

Adverbs

31. Adverbs are formed from adjectives by the addition of *e*, or *lich*, *liche*, or the weakened form *ly*. Examples of the first are: adj. *bright*, adv. *brighte*. When an adjective ends in *e* the adverb may have the same form: *clene*, *softe*. Examples of adverbs in *lich*, *liche*, and *ly* are: *royalliche*, *trewelich*, *sickerly*.

32. Adverbs are usually compared as in PE. An entirely exceptional form is shown in:

Therfore he song the murierly and loude I, 714.

33. Special adverbial forms end in *es* or *en*, as *ones*, *twyes*, *thryes*, *hennes*, *thennes*, *whiles*, *aboven*, *abouten*, *sithen*, and exceptionally *whilom*. Occasionally cardinal numerals are used adverbially: *two so ryche* (twice as rich); *swyche sevene as in the hevene sterres be* (seven times as many stars as are in the sky).

PRONOUNS

34. Personal Pronouns

	First Person	Second Person
Sing.	*Nom.* I, ich	thou, thow
	Dat. me, mee	the, thee
	Acc. me, mee	the, thee
Pl.	*Nom.* we, wee	ye, yee
	Dat. us	you, yow
	Acc. us	you, yow

Third Person

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.
Sing.	*Nom.* he, hee	hit, it	she, shee
	Dat. him, hym	him	hire, hir
	Acc. him, hym	hit, it	hire, hir

All Genders

Pl.	*Nom.* they
	Dat. hem
	Acc. hem

35. In the first person *ich* is most commonly used when contracted with a preceding verb, as *theech* (= *thee ich*). In passages in northern dialect the form *ik* occurs.

36. The pronoun *thou* is occasionally contracted with the preceding verb: *shaltou*, *wostow*, *nadstow* (*ne hadst thou*).

37. Genitives of the personal pronouns as distinguished from possessive adjectives seem not to occur except in phrases like *oure aller cock*, *youre aller cost*, *hir aller cappe*. The possessive adjectives are used as in PE. The forms are: first person, *myn*, *my* (pl. *myne*); *oure*, *our*. Second person, *thyn*, *thy* (pl. *thyne*); *youre*, *your*. Third person, *his* for both masculine and neuter (pl. *hise*); *hir*, *hire;* third person pl. *hire*, *hir*. Predicative and absolute forms are: *myn*, *myne; thyn*, *thyne; his; hires; oures; youres*; *heres*. The forms ending in *e* are regularly monosyllabic.

Demonstrative Pronouns and Adjectives

38. The definite article *the* is by origin an unstressed form of the demonstrative adjective. The stressed form of the same demonstrative survives in the word *that* with the plural *tho*. An unstressed form of *that* survives in the expressions *that oon*, *that other* (*the toon*, *the tother*). A trace of an original dative inflection is preserved in such phrases as *for the nones* and *atte nale*.

39. The definite article may be contracted either with a following noun, as in *thestaat* (*the estaat*), *tharray* (*the array*) or with a preceding *at: atte firste* (*at the first*), *atte laste* (*at the last*).

40. The demonstrative pronoun *this* has the plural forms *thes*, *these*, *thise*. These are all monosyllabic.

Relative Pronouns

41. The usual relative for all genders is *that*. It often joins with the personal pronouns *he*, *his*, *him*, to express what we now express by *who*, *whose*, *whom:*

> *That* fro the tyme that he first bigan
> To riden out *he* loved chivalrie. I, 44 f.

> Ther nas baillif ne hierde nor oother hyne
> *That* he ne knew *his* sleighte and *his* covyne I, 603 f.

42. *Who, whos, whom* also occur as relatives.

43. *Which*, plural *whiche*, is used as a relative adjective. The indefinite relatives are *who so, what so, who that, what that*, and *what*.

Interrogative Pronouns

44. Nominatives *who, what*, genitive *whos*, dative *whom*, accusatives *whom, what, which* (plural *whiche*). *Whether* (which of two) is often contracted to *wher*.

Other Pronouns and Adjectives

45. Other pronouns and indefinite adjectives are in general used as in PE, but the following perhaps deserve special notice: *Self* may be used as an adjective: *thy selve neyghebour*. No distinction seems to be made between such forms as *myself* and *myselven; hemself* and *hemselven, hemselve*. The adjective *ilke* is contracted with a preceding *the* to *thilke: thilke day* (= the same day).

46. *Swich, such*, has the plural *swiche* (usually monosyllabic). *Som* has the plural *some* (usually monosyllabic).

47. *Al* has the plural *alle*. The dissyllabic form *alle* also occurs in the singular before abstract nouns: *in alle vertu*. The plural *alle* before *the* is usually monosyllabic.

48. An indefinite pronoun, equivalent to the French *on*, occurs frequently in the forms *men, me: if men smoot it*.

VERBS

49. In ME, as in English of all periods, verbs are divided into two main classes, commonly called strong and weak, according to the method of forming the preterit and past participle. The weak verbs constitute by far the larger class, and their number has been constantly increased by the addition to it of all new verbs and by the transfer to it of many verbs which were originally strong.

Weak Verbs

50. Weak verbs form the stems of the preterit and past participle, not by a change of vowel, but by the addition of a *d* (or *t*) to the preterit stem.

51. There are two classes of weak verbs in ME.

	Preterit	*Past Participle*
Class I.	ede	ed
Class II.	de (–te)	d (–t)

52. In general the student familiar with PE will find no difficulty in this classification, and his sense of rhythm will usually be a safe guide to the pronunciation or non-pronunciation of the *e* in the preterit and participial forms.

53. The following weak verbs present special peculiarities — mostly familiar in PE:

Present	*Preterit*	*Past Participle*
telle	tolde	told
selle	solde	sold
recchen	raughte	
strecchen	straughte	
byen, beyen	boughte	
thenken,	thoughte	thought
thinken	thoughte	
werken	wroughte	wrought
bringen	broughte	brought
recchen	roughte	
seeken, seechen	soughte	sought
techen	taughte	taught

Tense Formation of Strong Verbs

54. In OE the strong verbs had four tense stems; namely, present, preterit singular, preterit plural, and past participle. These forms usually contained different stem vowels. In ME the different vowels for the preterit singular and plural are generally reduced to that of the singular. Where a separate vowel for the preterit plural occurs, it is usually that of the past participle.

55. The series of vowels found in these tense stems is not the same for all verbs. Originally there were seven distinct series. The classification of strong verbs in English is based upon these different series of stem vowels.

56. Class I. In the present infinitive verbs of this class have $\bar{\imath}$, or $\bar{\bar{y}}$, followed by a single consonant.

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
ryde	rood	riden	riden
wryte	wroot	writen	writen
dryve	droof	driven	driven

Other verbs belonging to this class are *agryse*, *aryse*, *byde*, *byte*, *glyde*, *ryve*, *shyne*, *shryve*, *smyte*, *stryve*, *thryve*.

57. Class II. In the present infinitive verbs of this class have *ē*, followed by a single consonant.

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
bede	bed	beden	boden
chese	chees		chosen
cleve (split)	(clefte, *wk.*)		cloven
crepe	crep (*or* crepte)		cropen
lese	lees		loren, lorn
sethe	seeth		soden

Parts of other verbs belonging to this class that appear in Chaucer are the present forms *flete*, *shete*, and the preterit *brew*,

58. Three verbs originally belonging to this class present peculiar forms:

flye flee	fleigh, fley flough	flowen flew	flown
shouve	shoof		shoven

Note. — *Flye* and *flee* were originally distinct verbs but were confused both in form and in meaning. *Flee* has also weak forms *fledde* and *fled*.

59. Class III originally consisted of verbs having *e* followed by two consonants, but under certain conditions this *e* was later changed to an *i*. Class III therefore consisted in ME of two subclasses: Class IIIa, verbs containing *e* followed by a liquid and another consonant; Class IIIb, verbs containing *i* followed by a nasal and another consonant.

60. Class IIIa

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
delve	dalf	dulve (*pt. sbj.*)	dolven
helpe	halp	holpen	holpen

Note. — An anomalous preterit *heelp* is also found.

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
kerve	carf	corven	corven
swelle	swal		swollen
yelde	yold	yolden	yolden
breste	brast	brosten	brosten
fighte	faughte	foughten	foughten

61. Present *worthe* (from *werthe*) has the preterit form *worth* (Hengwrt MS., *warth*). Of *thresshe* only the present infinite occurs.

62. Class III b

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
swimme	swam	swommen	swommen
(bi)ginne	(bi)gan	(bi)gonnen	(bi)gonnen
winne	wan	wonnen	wonnen
drinke	drank	dronken	dronken

So also *shrinke, sinke, stinke, swinke.*

clymbe	clomb	clomben	clomben
bynde	bond	bounden	bounden

So also *fynde, grynde, wynde.*

ringe	rong	rongen	rongen

So also *singe, springe, stinge, thringe, wringe.*

63. One verb borrowed from Old Norse belongs here: *renne, ran, ronnen, ronnen.*

64. Class IV. The characteristic of this class is a single vowel (usually *e*) before a single consonant (liquid or nasal).

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
bere	baar (bar) / beer (ber)	baren / beren	boren (borne)
stele	stal		stolen

Shere (shear), *tere* (tear) have p.p. *shoren, toren; were* (wear) was still a weak verb with pt. *werede* and p.p. *wered;* the strong forms *wore, worn* are later.

breke	brak	broken
speke	spak	spoken

Note. — These verbs belong here, although the consonant following the vowel is not a liquid or a nasal.

65. The two verbs containing a nasal after the vowel are:

come	cam, com	comen	come
nime	nam, nom	nomen	nomen

66. Class V. The characteristic of this class is short *e* followed by a single consonant (not liquid or nasal).

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
gete	gat		geten
wreke	wrak		wreken / wroken
yeve	yaf	yaven, yeven (*subj.*)	yeven
ete	eet	eten	eten

See has pt. s. *saugh, seigh, say, sey, sy;* pt. pl. *sawen, seyen, syen;* and p.p. *seyn, seye.*

67. In the following an original *j* in the present caused doubling of the consonant and change of *e* to *i:*

bidde	bad	beden	bidden
lyen, liggen	lay	layen	
sitte	sat, seet	seten	seten

68. The forms *quoth, quod*, 3 s. pr., preserved in conventional phrases, belong to this class.

69. Class VI. Verbs of this class originally had *a* followed by a consonant.

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
take	tok	token	taken

So *quake, forsake, shake, shape, wake. Fare* retains the strong p.p. *faren* but has the weak pt. *ferde* and p.p. *ferd. Bake* is usually inflected weak, but retains the strong p.p. in *bake mete.*

70. One verb has an intrusive *n* in pr. and p.p.:

stonde	stod	stoden	stonden

71. The following had an intrusive *j* in the present:

swere	swor	sworen	sworn / swore

72. *Heve* has pt. s. *haf, heef, heved.* The p.p. *stapen, stopen* is from *steppe.*

73. The influence of an original guttural consonant is shown in the following:

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
drawe	drough, drow	drowen	drawen
laughe	lough		laughen
slee	slough	slowen	slawen slayn

Class VII

74. Verbs of this class are from various sources.

Present	*Pret. Sing.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Part.*
bete	bet, beet		beten
lepe	leep		
lete, late	let, leet	leten	leten, laten
slepe	sleep	slepe	
wepe	weep		wepen, wopen
wexe	wex	wexen	woxen

These verbs have the following weak forms: pt. *bette*, p.p. *bet;* pt. *lette;* pt. *slepte, slepten; wepte, wepten.*

75.	knowe	knew	knewen	knowen

Here also belong *blowe, crowe, growe, sowe, throwe;* but *growe* has also pt. *growed.*

76.	falle	fel, fil	fellen	fallen
	holde	heeld	helden	holden
	hange, honge	honge	hengen	hanged
	wasshe	wesh	wesshen	wasshen

77. The forms of the verb *hoten* (to command, promise, be called) are very confused. *Hight* and *highte* occur indiscriminately as both present and preterit.

Inflection of Present

78. The inflections of the present indicative and present subjunctive are the same for both strong and weak verbs:

Indic. Sing.	1. –e	*Subj. Sing.*	1, 2, 3. –e
	2. –est		
	3. –eth, –th		
Plur.	1, 2, 3. –e	*Plur.*	1, 2, 3. –e (n)

79. In both the singular and the plural the unstressed *e* is sometimes silent or slurred. In the second and third person in the singular it is sometimes omitted in the spelling: *seist, lith, comth.*

80. The following contracted forms occur in the singular: *lixt* (liest), *bit* (bids), *brest* (bursts), *fint* (finds), *et* (eats), *forget* (forgets), *halt, holt* (holds) *hight* (is called), *rit* (rides), *set* (sets) *sit* (sits), *stont* (stands), *worth* (becomes).

81. A few instances of northern 3 s. ind. in *es* occur in the early poems and in the northern tales; but the northern forms do not belong to Chaucer's usage.

82. The verb *have* inflects: sing. *have, hast, hath;* pl. *haven, han, have, haveth.* Verbs like *see* inflect: sing. *see, seest, seeth;* pl. *seen, see.*

83. *Subjunctive.* — The subjunctive forms often drop the final *n* of the plural.

84. *Imperative.* — The imperative singular of strong verbs has properly no inflectional *e*, although a written *e* sometimes appears in the manuscripts, as *helpe me*, I, 2312. Some weak verbs, on the other hand, are entitled to a final *e*, but this is often not sounded, as *have*, I, 2225, *clepe*, I, 3432, *looke*, I, 3431. In the plural both strong and weak verbs regularly have the ending *eth: helpeth, studieth.*

85. *Infinitive.* — Endings *en* and *e* occur with approximately equal frequency, and the final *e* is often silent, especially in common words like *have.* The gerund is usually like the infinitive, but a few forms occur which preserve the older inflection: *to done, to seyne.*

86. *Participle.* — The present participle regularly ends in *inge*, but the final *e* is often silent except in rhyme; but it seems to be pronounced in *folwynge*, I, 2367.

87. Inflection of the Preterit

	Strong		*Weak*	
Sing.	song	bigan	lovede	wende
	songe	bigonne	lovedest	wendest
	song	bigan	lovede	wende
Pl.	songen	bigonnen	loveden	wenden

The plural often drops the final *n*, and in all forms a final *e* is sometimes dropped or silent, especially in words of more than two syllables. Occasionally the forms of the preterit singular of strong verbs are used for those of the plural: *bigan, lay, yaf.*

88. *Subjunctive.* — The preterit subjunctive has: singular *e*, pl. *en*. In strong verbs these endings are usually attached to the stem of the preterit plural, but in a few instances the stem of the preterit singular is used.

89. *Past Participle.* — As the forms of the past participle have been given for each verb, little need be said about them. The participles of weak verbs end in *ed, d*, or *t*, those of strong verbs regularly in *en*, but forms without final *n* often occur, as *falle, swore, wonne*. Stems ending in *l, r*, or a vowel frequently syncopate the *e* of the ending: *stoln, sworn, leyn, slayn.*

90. The past participle, strong or weak, often has the prefix *y-* (OE *ge-*): *ycomen, yfallen, ymaad, yserved.*

91. Preterit Present Verbs

These verbs which originally had a preterit tense with a present meaning had formed new preterits in OE. They are used as auxiliaries.

Can. Pres. ind. *can, canst, can; connen, conne, can.* Inf. *connen, conne.* Pret. *kouthe, koude.* P.p. *kouth.*

Dar. Pres. ind. *dar, darst, dar; dor, dar.* Pret. *dorste.*

Thar. Pres. ind. *thar, tharst, thar; thar.*

Shal. Pres. ind. *shal, shalt, shal; shullen, shuln, shul, shal.* Pret. *sholde.*

May. Pres. ind. *may, might, mayst, may; mowen, mowe, mow, may.* Pres. subj. *mowe.* Pret. *mighte.*

Moot. Pres. ind. *moot, moost, moot; mooten, moote, moot.* Pres. subj. *moote.* Pret. *moste.*

Woot. Pres. ind. *woot, woost, woot; witen, wite, woot.* Pres. subj. *wite.* Imp. *wite.* inf. *witen, wite.* Part. pres. *witinge.* Pret. *wiste.* P.p. *wist.*

Owe. Pres. ind. *owe, owest, oweth.* Pret. *oughte.*

92. Anomalous Verbs

Four very common verbs are entirely anomalous in their inflections.

Go. Pres. ind. sg. *go, goost, gooth;* Pl. *goon,* Subj. sg. *go;* Pl. *gooth.* Imp. sg. *go;* Pl. *gooth.* Inf. *goon, go.* Ptc. pres. *going.* Ptc. p. *goon, go* (especially in *ygo, ago*). *Yeede* and *wente*, from *wenden*, are used as preterites: both forms are inflected weak.

Doo. Pres. ind. *doo, doost, dooth; doon.* Subj. *doo; doon.* Imp. *doo; dooth.* Inf. *doon, doo.* P. pres. *doing.* P.p. *doon, doon, doo.* Pret. *dide* (weak).

Verb. Subst. Pres. ind. *am, art, is; been, bee,* rarely *arn.* Subj. *bee; been, bee.* Imp. *bee; beeth.* Inf. *been, bee.* P. pres. *being.* P.p. *been, bee.* Pret. *was, were, was; weren, were.* Subj. *were; weren, were.*

Wil. Pres. ind. *wil, wol, wilt, wolt, wil, wol; wiln, wil, woln, wol.* Subj. *wile, wolle.* Pret. *wolde.* P.p. *wold, woold.*

SYNTAX

The syntax of Chaucer, like that of most early writers, is looser, easier, less formal than that of modern English. The student will often find that constructions which at first sight seem difficult become familiar and easy when read aloud and regarded as careless, informal talk. Indeed, one source of Chaucer's perennial freshness and charm lies in the easy informality of his style.

To the production of this tone and manner three separate causes probably contributed. In the first place, the writing of English was not subjected to the regularizing and formalizing influence of stylistic and syntactical ideals established by schoolmasters enamoured of logic and of Ciceronian regularity. In the second place, although Chaucer appeals now and then to those "that reden that I wryte," not only was most of his work cast in the form of tales told by a group of lively talkers, but all of it was composed for an audience more accustomed to listening than to reading, more responsive to conversation than to books. Finally, we must believe that Chaucer's own temperament and taste played no small part in the result.

In the main, of course, the syntax of English in Chaucer's day was the same as in ours. No attempt to give a general outline of it need therefore be made, and no special study of it is necessary before beginning to read Chaucer. But the student may find both interest and help in noting some outstanding peculiarities.

The Sentence

93. *Ellipsis.* — Like modern colloquial speech, Chaucer's language freely omits what can readily be understood and supplied.

94. Omission of the subject:

And [we] made forward erly for to ryse I, 33;

And by his covenaunt [he] yaf the rekenyng I, 600;

And [we] graunted hym withouten moore avys I, 786.

95. The introductory or impersonal *it*, usually expressed in PE, is freely omitted:

[It] Bifil that in that seson on a day I, 19;

But nathelees passe over, [it] is no fors VI, 303.

96. Omission of the predicate:

His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas;

And eek his face [shoon], as it had been enoynt I, 198 f;

a worthy clerk,

As [is] preved by his wordes and his werk IV, 27 f.

97. In the following it is difficult to decide whether *is* is omitted or is consolidated in pronunciation with the preceding *this:*

But this [is] his tale, which that ye may heere IV, 56;

This [is] al and som, that Arcite moot dye I, 2761.

98. In descriptions details are often stated without a predicating verb. Whether these instances belong here or are to be regarded as of the nature of absolute constructions may be questioned. A striking series of such details is the following:

Upon an amblere esily she sat;
Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe I, 469–73.

Hundreds of other examples can easily be found: cf. I, 50, 115, 201, 203, 304, 361 f, 367 f, 457, 495, etc.

99. In Chaucer, as in OE and ME in general, a verb of motion need not be expressed after an auxiliary:

And som man wolde out of his prison fayn I, 1257.

Of the same nature is this:

That day by day [to go] to scole was his wone VII, 1694.

100. The following would indicate that any omission that could readily be supplied was permissible:

And therfore if that I mysspeke or [mis]seye I, 3139;

Cf. also I, 2827 f.

101. *Repetition of Subject.* — A superfluous pronominal subject is sometimes used, perhaps for clearness or emphasis:

Diverse folk diversely *they* seyde I, 3857;

Ye seye right sooth; this monk *he* clappeth lowde VII, 3971;

He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,
He shal have multipliyng of his grayn VI, 374 f.

102. *Superfluous Object.* — Similar to the superfluous subject is the superfluous object:

But al that he myghte of his freendes hente

On bookes and on lernynge he *it* spente I, 299 f;

He gan to grucche and blamed *it* a lite I, 3863.

Similar to the repetition of subject or object is the use of *ther* to repeat an idea just expressed:

In love dayes *ther* koude he muchel helpe I, 258;
At sessions *ther* was he lord and sire I, 357.

103. Many other instances of pleonasm occur, as in all early literature (cf. Shakespeare's "many a time and oft") and in colloquial speech:

And eek also VII, 1695, and often;

And wel we weren esed atte beste I, 29;

And eek in what array that they were inne I, 41.

104. *Parataxis and anacoluthon.* — The informal, colloquial tone of Chaucer's writings makes natural the occurrence of parataxis and anacoluthon. Examples of the former are:

An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene I, 116;

Therto he koude endite and make a thyng;
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng I, 325 f.

105. Anacolutha are not uncommon; here are characteristic examples:

The reule of Seint Maure, or of Seint Beneit,
Bycause that it was old, and somdel streit —
This ilke monk leet olde thynges pace I, 173–75;

Cf. I, 1534 ff, 2089 ff.
Perhaps also:

But precheth nat as freres don in Lente,
To make us for oure olde synnes wepe,
Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe IV, 12 ff.

For similar broken or loose constructions, see also III, 1125–27, IV, 87–91, VII, 4257–65, and especially the long series in I, 2496–2520.

106. *Conflation.* — Expressions resulting from the combination or confusion of two constructions are not uncommon:

Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve V, 932.

Compare our colloquial confusion: "One of the best men that ever was." The normal construction is seen in

For she was oon the faireste under sonne V, 734.

Though criticized by formalists, the following is unquestionably idiomatic:

Thanne wol I love yow best of any man V, 997.

107. The two constructions "she hadde lever" and "hir were lever" are confused in the following:

Al had hir levere have born a knave child IV, 444.

108. Absolute constructions of various sorts are frequent and usually make for simplicity and rapidity. Some of the most common of these have been treated above as examples of ellipsis (see §§ 96–98). More interesting grammatically is the absolute use of the infinitive:

And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste IV, 105;

And nevere ye to grucche it nyght ne day IV, 354;

And we also to bere hym companye VIII, 315.

109. The so-called "ablative absolute" is represented by such constructions as:

The cause yknowe and of his harm the roote I, 423.

110. Instead of a noun-clause introduced by *that*, an infinitive clause is common:

No wonder is a lewed man to ruste I, 502;

But it is good a man been at his large I, 2288.

111. *Apposition.* — We have become so accustomed to such constructions as "the city of London" that they seem more natural than the logically correct apposition, "the city London." Chaucer has both "the citee of Rome," VII, 4560, and "Thebes the citee," I, 939, II, 289.

112. The following look like examples of apposition, but may be due to other causes (cf. § 117):

a barel ale VII, 3083;

no morsel breed VII, 3624;

a botel hay IX, 14;

the beste galoun wyn IX, 24;

a thousand last quaad yeer VII, 1628;

children an heep VII, 1687.

113. Similar in form, though of different origin is the use of *maner:*

A maner Latyn corrupt was hir speche II, 519;

Swiche manere doctrine as men used there VII, 1689;

For she was, as it were, a maner deye VII, 4036.

114. Common, but easily explicable, are such failures in case agreement as the following:

Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable VII, 1877.

115. Examples of nouns in apposition with pronouns are of course common, but many cases which apparently belong here illustrate rather the use of a personal pronoun as a strong demonstrative, meaning "that well-known or notorious, or the like":

Certes he Jakke Strawe and his meynee VII, 4584;

To sleen hym Olofernes in his tente II, 940;

Bitwixen Theseus and hym Arcite I, 1210.

PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns

116. A partitive sense is expressed by *of* followed by a noun:

Of smale houndes hadde she I, 146;

Of remedies of love she knew I, 475.

117. The omission of *of* with *manere* and with nouns of measure has been treated above; see §§ 112–13.

Pronouns

118. As in PE, the possessive adjective is usually indistinguishable in form from the genitive case of the personal pronouns. But examples of the genitive do occur; for example:

In youre despite (*in despite of you*) VII, 1753.

119. The following are examples of the ethical dative, or of the dative of advantage or disadvantage:

And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel I, 4062;

To seken hym a chaunterie for soules I, 510;

The millere sholde nat stele hem half a pekke I, 4010.

120. The personal pronoun is often used reflexively:

To be my wyf and reule hire after me IV, 327;

And wondred hem in how honeste manere
And tentifly she kepte hir fader deere IV, 333 f;

Ne at this tale I saugh no man hym greve I, 3859.

121. Pronouns with *self* are used intensively as in PE:

Ther walketh now the lymytour hymself III, 874;

. . . that we
Ne koude nat us-self devysen how IV, 107 f.

122. The compound with *self* is also sometimes used like the simple personal pronoun, perhaps for emphasis:

Hymself drank water of the welle VII, 2105.

123. A curious substitute for the personal pronoun occurs in II, 1185:

My joly body shal a tale telle II, 1185.

Relative Pronouns

124. Attention has already been called to the fact that the common mode of forming a relative is with *that* alone or *that* followed by some case form of the personal pronoun. For the relative referring to a personal antecedent see I, 27, 286, 302, 310, etc. For *that he* meaning *who* see I, 44–45, 3111; for *that his* meaning *whose* see VII, 1694. With the omission of *that* the personal pronoun may appear to have a relative force:

And to be bounde under subjeccion
Of oon she knoweth nat his condicion I, 270 f.

125. In PE the pronoun is omitted in a relative clause only when the construction calls for the objective case. In older English it may be omitted even when it would be the subject of the clause:

With hym ther was dwellyng a poure scoler
Had lerned art I, 3190 f;

And over that a fyn hawberk
Was al ywroght of Jewes werk VII, 2053 f;

Ye ryde as coy and stille as doth a mayde
Were newe spoused . . . IV, 2 f.

Shakespeare has this construction:

There's a devil haunts thee in the likeness of a fat old man
I Henry IV, II, iv, 492.

It also occurs today in colloquial idiom: "There's a fellow comes here now and then."

126. A relative clause is used with a peculiar conditional force in such examples as the following:

But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope I, 643 f;

Eek Plato seith, whoso kan hym rede, I, 741;

Whoso that wole his large volume seke II, 60.

127. The compound relative is usually expressed by *that:*

He kepte that he wan in pestilence, I, 442.

but *what* also occurs, as in PE. An example of the adjectival use of *what* is the following:

What wyf that I take . . . IV, 165.

Interrogative Pronouns

128. In addition to the usual interrogative pronouns, occur *which* and *what*, meaning *what sort:*

And whiche they weren and of what degree I, 40;

And seyde thus: 'What man artow?' VII, 1885.

129. Interrogative *what* occurs often in the sense of *why:*

What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood I, 184;

What sholde we speke alday of hooly writ? I, 3902.

Indefinite Pronouns

130. *Som* still retained much of its original force. Where we say *one and all* Chaucer's idiom was *alle and some:*

'Now herkneth', quod the Millere, 'alle and some!' I, 3136.

131. The indefinite relative is sometimes expressed by *looke who*, *looke what* or *wayte what*. These idioms have usually been misunderstood; see the notes on V, 771 and 992. *Looke whan* (VI, 826) may belong to the same group.

132. As in PE, an adjective is sometimes used in Chaucer where an adverb might be expected:

Ful fressh and newe hir geere apyked was I, 365;

O Lord, our Lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large world ysprad! VII, 1643 f.

133. Conversely we sometimes have an adverb for an adjective:

But loked holwe and therto sobrely I, 289;

Aproche neer and looke up murily VI, 1888.

134. After *swich* the usual correlative is *which:*

in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour I, 3 f;

And synge of swich sentence
Which is agayn youre lawes reverence VII, 1753 f.

135. Before a concrete noun in the singular *a* is often omitted after *swich:* "swich thyng," VII, 3968 f, 4001; "swich caas," I, 655.

136. The numeral *bothe* is usually reinforced by *two:* "bothe two," I, 3184.

Adverbs

137. *Very* does not, I think, occur at all in Chaucer as an intensive adverb. In "a verray, parfit, gentil knyght" (I, 72), "a verray, parfit practisour" (I, 422), "this benigne, verray, feithful mayde" (IV, 343), we have the only examples which could be mistaken for intensive adverbs, and here the word is clearly an adjective, as it is in "for verray feere" (V, 860), etc.

138. The usual intensive adverbs are *ful, right, wel* and *al:* "ful devout corage" (I, 22), "ful plesaunt" (I, 138); "nat right fat" (I, 288), "right a myrie cheere" (I, 857); "wel bettre than" (I, 256), "a wel good wrighte" (I, 614); "al bismotered" (I, 76), "His goode steed al he bistrode" (VII, 2093).

139. Intensive adverbial phrases equivalent to *very* are: "for the maistrie" (I, 165), "for the nones" (I, 545). In I, 379 "for the nones" is adjectival, modifying "cook" (cf. note on the passage).

140. The idea expressed in PE by *at all* is expressed by

oght: "To tell hire if hir child wente oght forby" (VII, 1792).

141. As in PE, the purely introductory *there* is common in Chaucer: "A knyght ther was" (I, 43), "With him ther was his sone" (I, 79). To this category seem to belong the following:

This sentence and an hundred thynges worse
Writeth this man — ther God his bones corse! IV, 1307 f;

Arcite is cold — ther Mars his soule gye I, 2815.

142. In Chaucer the usual relative adverb is *ther* or *ther-as:*

That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam
At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram I, 547 f;

And certainly, ther Nature wol nat wirche,
Farewel phisik! go bere the man to chirche I, 2759 f;

To take oure wey ther-as I you devyse I, 34;

Ther-as this lord was kepere of the celle I, 172.

143. But *wher*, *wher-as* and *wher-that* are also common:

That oother wher hym list may ride or go I, 1351;

Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay VIII, 1023;

He seketh every hour and every place
Wher-as he hopeth for to fynde grace III, 919 f;

Freely to goon wher-that hym liste, over-al I, 1207.

144. *Homward* is used as an adverb of place as well as of direction:

And homward he shal tellen othere two I, 794;

His felawe taughte hym homward privelv VII, 1734.

145. Negation is expressed with combinations of negative pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Two or even three negatives may be used cumulatively: cf. I, 70 f, 251, 288, 321, 404, 412, 492 f., 513, 550, 603 f, 629–33, 689, 726; III, 10; VI, 444; VII, 3085, 3974. But a single negative is sometimes used: "he was nat gay" (I, 74); "he hadde geten hym yet no benefice"

(I, 291); "Noght o word spak he moore than was neede" (I, 304); "Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng" (I, 326).

146. *As* is often used to introduce an imperative:

As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire I, 2302;

For Goddes sake, as beth of bettre chere! IV, 7.

147. The origin of this idiom is obscure but it is perhaps not unrelated to the general use of *as* in specification: compare the following:

Acorded nat, as by his facultee I, 244;

Was, as in lengthe, the same quantite II, 8;

And for that day, as in that latitude II, 13;

and as by wey of kynde VII, 1840;

I loved alwey, as after my konnynge VII, 1847;

as to my wit (= in my opinion) III, 4.

148. In comparisons of degree the normal construction in Chaucer, as in PE, is *as . . . as:*

Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight I, 190;

His palfrey was as broun as is a berye I, 207.

But the first *as* is omitted more frequently than it is even in modern colloquial speech:

His nekke whit was as the flour delys I, 238;

Ther to he strong was as a champion I, 239;

To ride by the weye doumb as the stoon I, 774.

149. In comparisons of similarity Chaucer regularly uses *as* where modern idiom requires *like:*

That stemed as a forneys of a leed I, 202;

He was nat pale, as a forpyned goost I, 204.

Apparently he felt the influence of the suppressed predicate; compare:

And rage he koude, as it were right a whelpe I, 257.

150. Instead of the modern *as if*, Chaucer regularly uses the conjunctive adverb *as:*

With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse I, 81;

Embrouded was he, as it were a meede I, 89;

And eek his face, as it hadde been enoynt I, 199;

Oure Hoost gan to swere, as he were wood VI, 287.

151. The *as* correlative with *so* is often omitted:

Ne was so worldly for to have office I, 292;

That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk VI, 339 f.

152. Instead of *besides*, Chaucer regularly has *therto* or *yet:*

And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre I, 48;

And have a thank and yet a gowne and hood I, 612.

Verbs

153. *Agreement of Subject.* — The verb *to be* agrees, not — as in PE — with the preceding subject, but with the predicate noun or pronoun:

Forsothe it am nat I I, 602.

154. *Object.* — Some verbs which now require a preposition take a direct object in Chaucer:

And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente I, 374.

On the other hand, verbs which now take a direct object are sometimes used with a preposition:

And they to his comandement obeye VI, 194.

155. The use of two objects was more common in Chaucer than it now is:

Wyte it the ale of Southwerk I, 3140;

Goode men and wommen o thyng warne I yow VI, 377;

I yow relesse
That choys IV, 153 f;

But after the verb *teach* Chaucer sometimes has a preposition with the thing:

I shal my-self to herbes techen yow VII, 4139.

156. *Impersonal Verbs.* — The impersonal construction is very common: see I, 37, 385, 486, 534, 583, 682, 750, 756, 777, 785, 787, 828. *Lyketh* may be followed either by a direct object or by *to;*

And all that liketh me, I dar wel seyn
It liketh thee IV, 311 f;

It liketh to youre fader and to me IV, 345.

157. *Intransitive Verbs.* — The compound tenses of intransitive verbs are usually made, not with *have*, but with *be:*

At nyght were come into that hostelrye I, 23;

That from the tyme of kyng William were falle I, 324.

158. *Inconsistency of Tenses.* — In narration Chaucer continually shifts from past to present and from present to past without any apparent reason but the requirements of rhyme and meter; compare IV, 183 ff, 190–93, 260 ff, 276 ff, 292 f, 300 f, 365 f, 423 f.

159. Where we use a progressive form Chaucer commonly used a simple preterit. A striking example is:

Wente for to doon his pilgrymage. I, 78.

160. *The Infinitive.* — The simple infinitive, the infinitive with *to*, and the infinitive with *for to* are used with apparent indifference:

And thoghte, "Now is tyme wake al night I, 3672;

As monkes been or elles oghte be VII, 1833;

Lo, this declaryng oghte ynogh suffise VII, 3172;

Man schal nat suffer his wyf go roule aboute III, 653;

No wonder is a lewed man to ruste I, 502;

Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yeve I, 505;

Tel me what is thy cause for to synge VII, 1837.

161. After the verb *let*, the subject of a following infinitive may be either expressed or omitted:

Abyde and lat us werken thriftily I, 3131;

Lat se now who shall telle another tale I, 3116;

Lat maken with this water his potage VI, 368.

162. The subject of the infinitive is omitted in other constructions when it is unimportant or easily supplied:

He *Alma redemptoris* herde synge VII, 1708;

163. The following exemplify the complementary infinitive:

'Do come', he seyde, 'my mynstrales' VII, 2035;

Do thilke carte aresten boldly VII, 4210.

164. The past participle may replace the infinitive:

Thise marchaunts han doon fraught hir shippes newe II, 171;

He leet the feeste of his nativitee
Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee V, 45 f.

165. The gerund with passive meaning is more widely used in Chaucer than in PE:

Noght wiste he what this Latyn was to seye VII, 1713.

166. *The Subjunctive.* — The subjunctive is used more freely in Chaucer than in PE, but there are perhaps no usages which should cause any difficulty or doubt as to meaning.

167. The hortative use is naturally one of the most frequent:

The blisful martir quite yow youre meede I, 770;

And therfore whoso list it nat yheere
Turne over the leaf and chese another tale I, 3176 f.

168. Any idea stated as a conception may be expressed by the subjunctive:

He wolde the see were kept for any thing I, 276;

I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare I, 691;

Wo was his cook but-if his sauce were I, 351;

Were it of hoot or cold or moyste or drye I, 420;

Ful looth were hym to cursen for hise tithes I, 486;

Al speke he never so rudeliche or large I, 734;

Whom that he broghte into his pryvetee I, 4334;

and chees rather to dye
Than any Romayn dide hire vileynye V, 1404.

169. Naturally, therefore, future conditions and conclusions may be expressed by the subjunctive:

But-if ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed I, 872;

Whoso be rebel to my juggement I, 833;

For though a man be falle in jalous rage VI, 367;

And elles certeyn were they to blame I, 375;

For if it so bifelle, as God forbede,
That thurgh youre deeth youre lyne sholde slake,
And that a straunge successour sholde take
Youre heritage, O wo were us alyve!
Wherfore we pray you hastily to wyve IV, 136–140.

170. Conditions contrary to fact are of course expressed in the subjunctive:

Experience, though noon auctoritee
Were in this world, were right ynogh for me III, 1 f.

171. But curiously enough, assumptions, even when in accordance with fact, take the subjunctive:

And though that he were worthy, he was wys I, 68;

And though he hooly were and vertuous I, 515;

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age IV, 218;

Though that hire housbonde absent were anon IV, 435.

172. In the conclusion, however, we sometimes find the indicative where we should expect the subjunctive:

Wo was his cook but-if his sauce were
Poynant and sharp I, 351 f.

173. Clauses introduced by *al be* or *al be it*, even when expressing an assumption, may take the indicative:

But al be that he was a philosophre I, 297;

Al be it that I dar hire nat withstonde VII, 3110.

Prepositions

174. Prepositions are, in general, used in the same way as in PE and, as a rule, have the same meanings. But there are many differences; they can best be illustrated by examples.

After (for)

This poure wydwe awaiteth al that nyght
After hir litel child but he cam noght VII, 1776 f;

That in that place after hir sone she cryde
Where he was casten in a pit bisyde VII, 1795 f.

At

I have be shryven this day at (*by*) my curat III, 2095;

What eyleth this love at (*with respect to*) me VII, 1975.

Specially noteworthy are *at his large* (I, 2288), 'free'; *at eye* (I, 3016), 'clearly, with one's own eyes'; *hunte at wilde deer* (VII, 1926), cf. 'play at marbles.'

For

For (*to prevent*) percynge of his herte VII, 2052;

He wolde the see were kept for (*in spite of*) any thing I, 276;

The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel I, 2020;

For (*as for*) blankmanger that made he with the beste I, 387;

'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for (*by*) Cristes passion' I, 4327.

In-with (= within)

Yaf in hir thoght in-with a litel space VII, 1794;

In-with youre chambre dar I saufly sayn IV, 870;

Considered hath in-with hise dayes olde IV, 1394;

This purs hath she in-with hir bosom hyd IV, 1944.

Of

. . . this song I have herd seye
Was maked of (*about*) oure blisful lady free VII, 1721 f;

This Millere smyled of (*at*) hir nycetee I, 4046;

But if he wolde be slayn of (*by*) Symkyn I, 3959;

Of (*from*) many a pilgrym hastow Cristes curs I, 4349;

And by hym baiteth his dextrer
Of (*on*) herbes fyne and goode VII, 2103 f.

On

Sik lay the maunciple on (*of*) a maladye I, 3993.

To

And shortly whan the sonne was to (*at*) reste I, 30.

Toward

To scoleward and homward whan he wente VII, 1739.

Upon (specifying a penalty)

And Arcite is exiled upon his heed I, 1344.

With (by)

With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake I, 406;

The hunte strangled with the wilde beres I, 2018;

The cartere overridden with his carte I, 2022.

175. In the following, *with* is an adverbial particle, attached to the verb:

Ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye I, 792 f;

And herbes shal I right ynowe yfynde,
To hele with youre hurtes hastily V, 470 f.

Cf. also V, 461 and the similar use of *upon* and *on:*

And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes III, 559;

That wereth on a coverchief or a calle III, 1018.

VII

VERSIFICATION

1. *Stress.* — A characteristic feature of the English language is the variation of stress with which different syllables are pronounced. Some are strongly stressed; some less strongly; some not at all. There may, indeed, be several degrees of stress; for practical purposes it is sufficient to distinguish two, primary stress (marked ′) and secondary stress (marked ″).

The different arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables exhibited by words and phrases give different patterns of movement. In ordinary speech and in normal prose these patterns are so various and so unrelated to one another in form as to be subject to no perceptible laws of arrangement. In verse, however, only such phrasal stress-patterns can be used as are adapted to the particular verse form aimed at; that is, only such as do not defeat the persistence of the fundamental rhythmical pattern of the verse. If the phrasal stress-patterns repeat the verse pattern with absolute identity, the result is monotony; if they counteract the verse pattern throughout, the result is roughness of movement or absence of the expected rhythm; if the interplay of the two kinds of patterns is skilfully adjusted, the result is a movement agreeable because of its variety in unity.

Rhythm is a basic element of both music and verse. Other elements enter into each: melody and harmony into music; tone color and various obscure relations and associations into verse; but rhythm is fundamental. The time relations of the notes composing the bars of modern music are theoretically exact and absolute, and music is written in conformity to theory. In execution, however, effective expression commonly demands some variation from mechanical regularity. The time relations of the syllables composing the measures of verse are theoretically as exact as those of music, but wider variations from mechanical regularity are not only permissible but desirable; because the beauty of verse lies so largely in the variety of movement produced by the phrasal patterns that are fitted into the verse pattern.

The general principles of stress and movement in Chaucer's language and in his verse patterns are, so far as we can discover, essentially the same as for Present English. There are, to be sure, differences in the position of stress in certain words and word-groups; there are probably differences in the relative weight of syllables, stressed and unstressed; but these are mere matters of detail. There are also differences between Chaucer and some modern poets in their conceptions of allowable and desirable variations from the normal verse pattern; but they are not greater than those between Shakespeare and Milton on the one hand and Pope and Johnson on the other.

There is, however, a difference between Chaucer's English and Present English which is of much importance to the versification. This consists in the fact that a majority of the words in Chaucer's English ended in an unstressed final *e* or *en* or *es*. Since Chaucerian words contained the same syllables as their modern descendants plus this unstressed *e*, any equal sequence of words would usually contain a larger number of very lightly stressed syllables than in Present English; for example:

Present Eng. — And small fowls make melody;
Chaucer — And smalè fowlès makèn melodyè.

This resulted in giving lighter weight and a more rapid movement in the greater number of the lines of verse. The general character of the verse was also affected by the fact that a large number of lines ended in so-called feminine rhymes; that is, in rhymes consisting of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one.

In versification unstressed final *e*'s were often either slurred or entirely suppressed. The conditions of such slurring or suppression will be explained below.

Sources of Unstressed Final *es*, *en*, *e*

Final *es* is the regular ending for the genitive singular and for all cases of the plural of nouns. It is usually given full syllabic value, as for example: *bookes*, *endes*, *cora'ges;* but in words of three syllables or more it usually loses its syllabic value unless

the syllable immediately preceding is accented. The different forms of the word *corone* (crown) illustrate this well: *coro'nės*, *co'rouns*. Other examples of the syncopation of the vowel are *merchaunts*, *lovyers*.

Final *en* appears as the ending of the infinitive and of the plural of the indicative and subjunctive of all verbs and of the past participle of strong verbs.

In a few verbs like *haven*, *sayen*, *seyen*, the *e* is suppressed and the *n* retained: *han*, *sayn*, *seyn*. In most verbs, however, this is not possible, and the *en* is either retained in full or the syllable is reduced to *e* by dropping the *n*. The final *e* thus produced is treated like final *e* from any other source.

The *en* forming the plural of such words as *oxen*, *eyen*, and the like (see § 20) is treated in the same way.

Besides the final *e* derived from the dropping of *n*, two main classes demand consideration: (1) final *e* belonging to the basic form; (2) inflectional *e*.

(1) *Final e Belonging to the Basic Form.* — All nouns which in OE ended in the nominative singular in *e* or any other vowel have final *e* in Chaucer; for example, *ende*, *ende; nama*, *name; sunu*, *sone*. All nouns of feminine gender in OE, whether they originally ended in a vowel or not, have final *e* in Chaucer. This is because so many of the case forms of feminine nouns ended in final *e* that the *e* was extended even to those forms not entitled to it; examples: *lār*, *lore; mād*, *meede; cwēn*, *queene*. The only exceptions are a few words like *hond*, which because of their peculiar inflections had few forms in final *e*.

In OE some adjectives had a final vowel in the basic forms, as *grēne*, *swēte*, *niwe*. These naturally retain the vowel in Chaucerian English: *greene*, *sweete*, *newe*. Others had no vowel-ending in the strong forms of the nominative; e.g. *gōd*, *eald*. These are without final *e* in Chaucer except when they take an inflectional *e* for the plural or the definite use: *good*, *old* (see § 26).

Adverbs regularly end in *e* or *liche*, both of which are derived directly from OE forms: adj. *slow*, adv. *slowe; glad*, *gladliche*. The ending *liche* was often reduced to *ly*.

Prepositions and conjunctions often show in Chaucer a final *e* which is derived from some fuller form in OE and has dis-

appeared in PE pronunciation, as *above* (OE *onbufan*), *aboute* (OE *onbūtan*).

(2) *Inflectional e.* — In Chaucerian English few nouns can really be said to take an inflectional *e* under any conditions. There are some instances of an inflectional *e* in the dative of certain nouns which do not have *e* in the nominative singular; but these are exceptional forms, preserved in petrified phrases like *to bedde, in bedde, on fyre, on lyve, in londe.*

Adjectives which have no final vowel in the basic forms take an inflectional *e* when used in the plural or in the definite inflection (see § 25).

Verbs have final inflectional *e* in the following forms: pr. ind. 1 s.; pr. subj. 1, 2, 3, s.; pr. imp. 2 s.; strong verbs: pt. ind. 2 s.; pt. subj. 1, 2, 3, s.; weak verbs: pt. ind. 1, 3, s.; pt. subj. 1, 2, 3, s. These inflectional *e*'s are, however, very unstable, and are often silent, especially in a word of three or more syllables.

Many of the final *e*'s enumerated above were on the point of disappearing from pronunciation in the ordinary speech of Chaucer's time. Indeed the history of the language seems to show that Chaucer was decidedly conservative in retaining so many of these *e*'s. His language was doubtless that of the most cultivated and conservative classes of society, the court and the nobility. The instability of these *e*'s in ordinary speech made it quite natural that in versification they should be treated with considerable freedom, being pronounced or not as the verse required it. As has already been said, the tendency to silencing was much greater at the end of long words than at the end of short ones.

In addition to the general suppression of final unstressed *e*, many *e*'s disappeared in verse as an effect of elision.

Elision

Final unstressed *e* was regularly elided in verse when followed by a word beginning with a vowel or with a silent or lightly stressed *h*. In words of French origin initial *h* was regularly silent: *honour, honest, humble*, and the like. It was lightly stressed in a few common words of native origin: *he, his, hym, hir, hem, have, hadde*, and a few other words when

occurring in unemphatic position. Before a strongly pronounced *h* elision does not occur:

To fernè halwès kowthe in sondry londès I, 14.

Examples of elision before vowels are:

So priketh hem nature in hir corages I, 11;

Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie I, 46;

For he was late ycome from his viage I, 77.

The following show elision before a weak *h:*

And evere honoured for his worthynesse I, 50;

Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe I, 129;

By his clennesse how that his sheep sholde lyve I, 506.

The *e* of such slightly stressed words as the definite article, the negative particle *ne*, and unemphatic pronouns is often elided. In some of the following examples the two words involved are written as one word (see the italicized words):

Of woodecraft wel koude he al the usage I, 110;

The staat, *tharray* the nombre and eek the cause I, 716;

That ye *narette* it nat my vileynye I, 726;

That hast the sighte of hir, and I *thabsence* I, 1239;

Allas! he *nadde* holde him by his ladel VIII, 51;

Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore VII, 4546;

Mathynketh that I shal reherce it here I, 3170.

Elision is not confined to the vowel *e*. The unstressed *o* in *to* is sometimes elided before such words as *abyde* (II, 797), *acord* (IX, 98), *escape* (V, 1357), *espye* (VII, 1989), *Athenes* (I, 1194, 1391).

Similarly the *o* in *so* seems sometimes to be elided before such words as *estaatly:*

So estaatly was he of his governaunce I, 281

When the personal pronouns *I* and *thou* preceded an initial vowel the second vowel was probably dropped:

And slee me in this wode ther I am inne
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight.

When the pronoun *thee* is contracted with a following *e* it is impossible to determine which vowel disappears:

If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt III, 1611.

Suppression and Slurring

There are many instances in Chaucer's verse in which a final *e* that might be pronounced is undoubtedly entirely suppressed. Examples of this occur on every page; see Prologue, lines 1, 23, 35, 64, 68, 85, 88, 93, 97, 98. It would be difficult to give rules covering all the cases that occur; and the rules, if given, would be too complicated to be of much value. A little experience in the reading of Chaucer's verse will soon enable the student to deal easily with practically every instance that may occur.

It is to be borne in mind, however, that Chaucer's verse is not mechanical in its movement, and that it is not necessary to suppress as many unstressed syllables as some editors have supposed. In general the evidence seems to indicate that slurring — that is, rapid pronunciation with very light stress — is a better way of dealing with groups of two unstressed syllables between stresses than is the usual mode of suppressing one of them. In I, 567 and 586 it does not seem necessary to suppress the final *e* of *maunciple*. In I, 1176 *perpetuelly* has, in my opinion, five syllables, and it is not necessary to reduce them to four, although they occupy the time of only four. There are clearly two unstressed syllables before the first stress in the following lines:

With a thredbar cope, as is a poure scoler I, 260;

Sevene hennes, for to doon al his pleasaunce VII, 4056.

There is also little doubt that the first foot of VII, 4157 consists of the words *pekke hem up*, with the stress on the last word:

Pekke hem up′ right″ as they growe,′ and ete′ hem in.′

In I, 975 light and rapid pronunciation seems better than running together the final syllable of *statue* and the word *of:*

The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe.

In like manner it seems more satisfactory to pronounce lightly the final *y* of *many* than to join it with a following vowel:

For many a man so hard is of his herte I, 229;

And eek with staves many another man VII, 4572.

The tendency to reduce two syllables to one in such cases as those discussed and in many others seems to be based upon mechanical theories of versification inherited from the eighteenth century. There can be no question that such theories have seriously affected, not only the reading of Chaucer, but the attitude of his editors in the treatment of the text of his poems. They have rejected readings well supported by manuscript authorities, merely because the resulting lines did not conform to the theories of versification in which they believed, and which therefore they felt sure Chaucer must have followed. A study of the manuscripts indicates that Chaucer was as free in the use of light extra syllables as was Shakespeare or Milton or any of the poets of recent years. The extra syllable is naturally most frequent at the caesural pause, but many instances of it occur in other parts of the line. The following examples illustrate the extra syllable at the caesural pause:

To Caunterbury || with ful devout corage I, 22;

And wonderly delyvere || and of greet strengthe I, 84;

That in hir coppe || ther was no ferthyng sene I, 134;

She was so charitable || and so pitous I, 143;

What sholde he studie || and make hym-selven wood I, 184;

I seigh his sleves || ypurfiled at the hond I, 193;

His bootes souple, || his hors in greet estaat I, 203;

Wyd was his parisshe || and houses fer asonder I, 491;

By good ensample, || this was his bisynesse I, 520;

But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed I, 782;

As any wesele hir body gent and smal I, 3234.

The following illustrate the occurrence of an extra syllable elsewhere than at the caesural pause:

Of Engelond to Caunturbury they wende I, 16;

Of Algezir and riden in Belmarye I, 57;

His hors weren goode, but he was nat gay I, 74;

A Cristophere on his brest of silver sheene I, 115;

Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe I, 130;

But soore wepte she if any of hem were deed I, 148;

So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage I, 211;

For hym was levere have at his beddes heed I, 293;

He semed swich, hise wordes weren so wise I, 313;

Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng I, 326;

It is ful fair to been ycleped *Madame* I, 376;

And where they engendred and of what humour I, 421;

That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed I, 455.

The Caesural Pause and Elision

The varied beauty of the caesural pause in Chaucer's decasyllabic verse is a striking manifestation of his skill as a metrist, and well deserves the attention of the student of English versification. Not less striking is the manner in which he relates it to sequences of two unstressed syllables and to the confluence of vowels. The former have been discussed in the preceding section. The use of the caesura to prevent elision requires no discussion, and needs to be illustrated by only a few examples:

And whiche they werë; and of what degree I, 40;

Wel knew he th' oldë/Esculapius I, 429;

Til that he haddë/al the sighte yseyn I, 4379;

The teeris of Eleynë,/and the wo II, 70.

But naturally where the pause is slight, elision is not prevented by the caesura. Examples can be found on almost every page of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Nine-syllable Lines

Some scholars have been very loth to admit that Chaucer wrote lines in the so-called heroic verse which lacked the un-

stressed syllable of the first foot — what is technically called the anacrusis. Here again, however, the authority of the manuscripts seems decisive. There are many instances in which all the manuscripts agree in presenting a line in which anacrusis is lacking, and in numerous others it is lacking in the best manuscripts. Chaucer was not alone in his use of such lines. Many examples occur in the original texts of Elizabethan dramatists; they have been removed from the standard texts only by arbitrary editorial assumptions. Indubitable examples in Chaucer's Prologue are the following:

Al bismotered with his habergeon I, 76;

Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere I, 170;

For to deelen with no swich poraille I, 247;

Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed I, 294;

Everich for the wisdom that he kan I, 371;

Maken mortreux and wel bake a pye I, 384.

That Chaucer, unlike some of his modern editors, did not feel such lines to be objectionable is shown not only by the frequent occurrence of them in the *Canterbury Tales* but also by the considerable number which appear in that portion of the *Tales* which is supposed to have been most carefully revised. It is worthy of attention that the very first line of the Prologue is a line of this character. Editors have attempted to formalize the line by giving three syllables to the word *Aprille*, but no one has ever produced any evidence to support this pronunciation and the etymology of the word is against it. The line should be read:

Whan' that A'prille with' hise shou'res soo'te.

A careful study of all the lines lacking anacrusis indicates that Chaucer constantly used this device to secure special metrical effects. And in view of the fact that no one objects to the absence of an unstressed syllable between the caesura and the following stress, it is difficult to see why anyone but a counter of syllables can object to the absence of the unstressed syllable at the beginning of a line. The rhythmical effect is the same in both cases. If the caesura is not actually a pause which

divides one part of the line from another, it is difficult to see what rhythmical function it has.

Hints on Reading Chaucer's Verse

It is far from certain that we know exactly how Chaucer would have read his own verse. Scholars differ with regard to such questions as the extent to which he admitted nine-syllabled lines, the conflicting claims of slurring and syncopation, and the treatment of extra syllables and of hiatus at the caesura. But any person of reasonably good ear can easily read most verses in harmony with his own sense of the rhythm pattern, without troubling very much to inquire into the historical justification for silencing final *e* or pronouncing it. It is safe to say that any one who will give to words and phrases their natural stresses — which are in most cases identical with those of Modern English — can read Chaucer's verse acceptably, without stopping often to inquire why a final *e* is or is not sounded. In the few instances in which difficulty is encountered, reference to the proper grammatical section in this introduction will settle the question of final *e* and a brief investigation of the history of English accent (see Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar*, I, ch. V) will usually suffice to account for any word not accented as it is in Present English.

Stanza Forms

All of Chaucer's narrative verse, except the 'Monk's Tale,' is written either in rhymed couplets or in stanzas of seven lines.

The rhymed couplet is his favorite form for both decasyllabic and octosyllabic verse. It is not our intention to discuss Chaucer's management of the couplet in detail, but it is worth while to mention the skill with which he avoids the monotony which arises from allowing the end of the couplet always to coincide with the end of a sentence or clause. His skill in this respect is particularly noticeable in the Prologue, where not only a sentence pause, but even a paragraph pause, often occurs at the middle of the couplet. Chaucer also freely uses run-on lines in both his octosyllabic and his decasyllabic

verse, though far more frequently in the former than in the latter.

The seven-line stanza is used in *The Parlement of Foules* and in several of the *Canterbury Tales*. The arrangement of the rhymes is *ababbcc*. Examples of it are abundant in the selections.

In the 'Rime of Sir Thopas' Chaucer has imitated, with variations, a stanza form in frequent use in the metrical romances, which he was using as the vehicle of his burlesque. The basic form of this stanza consists of six lines, four of four beats each and two of three beats each. The short lines rhyme together; the four-beat lines sometimes rhyme in couplets and sometimes all four together, giving two fundamental rhyme schemes: aa*bccb* or aa*baab*. Into these fundamental schemes is sometimes introduced a short line of only one beat. This may be introduced either before or after the second section. When it is introduced after the second section, it is followed by a third section of three lines. Whenever this line of one beat is present, the section which follows rhymes its third line with the one-beat line. The rhymes of the couplet in this section may or may not be the same as those of the preceding section. Students will find it interesting to work out these variations and to notice the curious effects produced by them.

Other stanza forms are used in some of the minor poems. We have at present no concern with them; but the experiment in *terza rima* (in *A Compleynte to His Lady*) is interesting biographically; and the "Compleynte" in *Anelida and Arcite* is a remarkable *tour de force* of versification and rhyming.

VIII

ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY

Chaucer was much interested in the scientific knowledge and theories of his time, and in his writings he makes considerable use of terms and ideas belonging to several of the sciences. The allusions to physiology and medicine and to alchemy are dealt with in the notes as they occur, but those to astronomy and astrology are so numerous that a brief outline of the funda-

mental principles of these branches of knowledge seems necessary.

Astronomy

The system of astronomy prevalent throughout the Middle Ages was that known as the Ptolemaic System, from Claudius Ptolemaeus, a celebrated mathematician, astronomer, and geographer who lived in Egypt in the second century after Christ. Ptolemy was not the founder of the science but a continuator of the discoveries and theories of the Greeks, Egyptians, and Babylonians. His greatest astronomical work, the *Almagest*, incorporating the ideas and calculations of his predecessors, was the consummation of Greek astronomy and remained throughout the Middle Ages a principal authority on the subject. His work was taken up and continued from the ninth to the thirteenth century by Arabian scholars and their successors in western Europe. Of especial interest historically are the Toletan Tables of the positions and motions of the heavenly bodies, drawn up at Toledo in 1080, and the Alphonsine Tables, prepared in 1252 under the authority of Alphonso X, king of Castile. One of the most important treatises was *Sphaera Mundi*, written in the thirteenth century by an Englishman, John Holywood, whose name was latinized as Johannes de Sacro Bosco. In the following sketch we shall disregard refinements of the subject; and to simplify the exposition, shall expound the system as if it were true.

The General Cosmic Plan. — At the center of the world, or cosmos, is the earth, which is spherical in form and approximately 18,000 miles in circumference. The earth is fixed in position and does not revolve on its axis. The alternation of day and night, the motions of the planets, the rising and setting of the fixed stars, and other celestial phenomena are caused by the motions of the heavenly bodies. These are placed in eight concentric hollow spheres, each of which has its own independent motion; but all of which are also subject to an additional motion, due to the outer or ninth sphere — the *primum mobile*, or "firste moeving" (as Chaucer translates the name).

The Planets. — The seven spheres nearest the earth contain

the seven planets. These are: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Each of the planets is carried round the earth in a definite period of time by the revolution of its sphere. The periodic times of the planets are: for the Moon, twenty-seven days, eight hours; for Mercury, Venus, and the Sun, three hundred and sixty-five days and about six hours; for Mars, two and a half years; for Jupiter, twelve years; for Saturn, thirty years. In addition to the movement imparted by its sphere, each planet has also a movement within its sphere round a fixed center. It is this movement that causes the apparently erratic motions of the planets in the sky. When the movement of the planet is in the same direction as that of its sphere, that is, from west to east, its motion is called direct; when opposed to the direction of the sphere the motion is called retrograde.

The Fixed Stars. — The eighth sphere, counting from the earth as a center, contains the fixed stars, which are set in the sphere and have no individual motions; but the sphere as a whole has a motion of its own from west to east, but so slow that 36,000 years are required for a complete revolution.

The Primum Mobile. — The ninth sphere makes a complete revolution from east to west in twenty-four hours. It contains no heavenly bodies but its motion is so powerful that it causes all the other spheres to revolve with it. It is this action to which Chaucer refers in the lines:

> O firste moevyng! crueel firmament,
> With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
> And hurlest al from est til occident,
> That naturelly wolde holde another way! II, 295–298.

It is called a cruel firmament because its daily motion forces all the heavenly bodies to revolve round the earth in a direction contrary to their natural motions.

The Zodiac. — The celestial equator may be regarded as lying in the ninth sphere and, naturally, as everywhere distant by ninety degrees from the celestial poles, that is, the axial points of the celestial revolutions. Crossing the celestial equator at two exactly opposite points, called the equinoctial points, and inclined to the equator at an angle of $23\frac{1}{2}°$ is the line of

the ecliptic. On each side of the ecliptic, in a zone 16° wide, lie the signs of the zodiac. As there are twelve of them and they are of equal size, each sign occupies 30° on the line of the ecliptic. Beginning at the vernal equinox, or first point of the zodiac, the names of the signs are: Aries, the Ram; Taurus, the Bull; Gemini, the Twins; Cancer, the Crab; Leo, the Lion; Virgo, the Virgin; Libra, the Balances; Scorpius, the Scorpion; Sagittarius, the Bowman; Capricornus, the Goat; Aquarius, the Waterman; Pisces, the Fishes. The signs of the zodiac are supposed to have coincided originally with the constellations bearing the same names, but in Chaucer's time constellation and sign no longer occupied identical positions.

As seen from the earth, the motions of the Sun and the other planets seem always to lie within the zodiacal belt, and the planets are therefore spoken of as moving through the signs of the zodiac. As the Sun accomplishes a complete revolution of the earth in 365 days, his motion is approximately one degree a day, or one sign a month. But inasmuch as the first point of the zodiac, the vernal equinox, is reached near the middle of March, the progress of the Sun through any sign occupies parts of two months. In the present century, the Sun passes the equinoctial point about the twenty-first of March, but in Chaucer's time, owing to a slight error in the length of the calendar year as calculated by Julius Caesar, the equinoctial point had slipped back nine days, and the Sun entered the first degree of Aries a little before noon on March 12, as Chaucer himself says in his treatise on the *Astrolabe*, pt. ii, § 1.

Prominent Stars. — In observing the positions and motions of the heavenly bodies, reference was naturally made to the more prominent fixed stars. Many of these had been carefully observed by ancient astronomers and named for purposes of cataloguing and reference. Thus Chaucer in the 'Squire's Tale' (IV, 265) fixes the time as that when the sign Leo [1] was just ascending above the horizon with the fixed star Aldrian, or, as it is now called, Aldiran. Professor Skeat thinks this was the star catalogued by modern astronomers as θ Hydrae, but it may have been the more brilliant star (α Leonis), more commonly called Regulus. In the same way, in the 'Franklin's

[1] The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian.

Tale' (V, 1281) Chaucer speaks of the star Alnath (α Arietis), which was supposed to have originally coincided with the imaginary equinoctial point lying in the ninth sphere, but which, because of the precession of the equinoxes (attributed to the slipping of the eighth sphere), was in Chaucer's time several degrees distant from it.

Astronomical Calculations. — The motions of the heavenly bodies and the phenomena resulting from these motions had been carefully observed by the ancient astronomers; and calculations based upon these observations could be made to ascertain the positions and motions at any time in the past, present, or future. The apparatus for these calculations may seem to the beginner rather complicated, but in reality they are comparatively simple; and surprisingly accurate, considering the lack of telescopes and the general inaccuracy of measurements in all science until very recent times. In general, the position of any planet at any required time was calculated in the following manner. The inquirer first consulted his tables (Tables Toletanes) to ascertain the position which the planet had occupied at the birth of Christ. This position was known as the "root." He then looked in a table of motions for "collect yeeres," which showed the number of signs, degrees, minutes, and seconds to be added to the root for the motion of the planet during long periods: 1000, 500, 400, 300, 200, and 100 years. This would give the position of the center of the planetary orb or epicycle at the beginning of the century in question. To this would next be added the motions shown in a table of "expanse yeeres," which would result in giving the position of the planetary center at the beginning of the year in question. Another set of tables would give the motion of the planetary center by months, days, hours, and minutes, and would enable the inquirer to ascertain the position of the planetary center at the exact time desired. Corrections would then have to be made for the revolution of the planet in its epicycle round the fixed center which lay in its sphere; and if minute accuracy were desired, further corrections would have to be taken from tables showing the equations for the relative motions of the planetary sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars, and the *primum mobile* or ninth

sphere. The passage in which Chaucer speaks with greatest detail of such calculations is that in the 'Franklin's Tale' describing the operations of the Orleans clerk to ascertain a suitable time for the removal of the rocks from the coast of Brittany (cf. V, 1273–83).

Astrology

In modern times we distinguish sharply between the scientific study of the nature and motions of the stars, which we call astronomy, and the study of the influences supposed to be exerted upon the affairs of the world and the characters and fortunes of men by the stars individually and in combination with one another, which is called astrology. In ancient times both studies flourished together, and although there were some strong opponents of astrology even in the Middle Ages, there was no strict separation of the subjects until comparatively recent times. The adoption of the Copernican System seemed a severe blow to believers in astrology, but modern practitioners and believers assert that the truth of astrology has not been at all affected by the change in astronomical theory. Chaucer's real attitude toward astrology is difficult to understand. In a well-known passage in the treatise on the *Astrolabe* he denies belief, saying: "Nathales, thise ben observauncez of judicial matiere and rytes of payens, in which my spirit ne hath no feith, ne no knowing of hir horoscopum," but he obviously had considerable knowledge of the subject and in his writings uses its doctrines as if he believed them.

The chief sources and causes of influence were supposed to be: the seven planets, singly or in combination; the north and south points in which the moon crosses the ecliptic, technically called the Dragon's Head and the Dragon's Tail; the signs of the zodiac, with various subdivisions of them; and certain fixed segments of the heavens, independently of their relations to the zodiac.

The Planets. — To each of the seven planets were ascribed particular qualities and the capacity for various influences upon the characters and fortunes of men under certain favorable or unfavorable circumstances.

For example, Mars is described as a hot, dry, fiery, choleric,

masculine, nocturnal, malignant, violent planet. Anyone born when his influence is predominant will have a strong, well-set, but short body, bony, lean, and muscular; complexion red rather than ruddy; sharp hazel eyes; violent countenance — "some say a round face, but this is seldom the truth; light brown, flaxen, or red hair, but this cannot be depended upon." If Mars is well situated with reference to other heavenly bodies — "well dignified" is the technical term — the person born under his domination will be fearless, violent, irascible, and unsubmitting; fond of war and contention, but in other respects prudent, rational, and even generous and magnanimous. If Mars is ill dignified, the native will be wholly destitute of any virtue; prone to violence, quarrels, treachery, robbery, murder, treason, and every species of cruelty and wickedness.

Venus is described as hot and moist and feminine, nocturnal and temperate. Those born under her influence are said to be elegantly formed and extremely beautiful; with sparkling hazel or black eyes, round, smooth face, light or chestnut hair, dimples in the cheek or chin, a wandering eye denoting desire, a sweet voice, and a very engaging address. If Venus is well dignified, the person born under her influence will be even-tempered, kind, and sweet; very merry and cheerful; neat and a lover of dress; fond of music and every elegant amusement; very prone to love, yet truly virtuous; much inclined to be jealous. If Venus is ill dignified, the native will be lewd, profligate, shameless, and wholly abandoned and inclined to every species of lust and depravity.

Each of the planets is said to govern certain parts of the body and regions of the earth, and to exert especial influence upon certain diseases.

Properties of the Signs. — The amount and nature of the influence exerted by a planet depends partly upon its situation in the zodiac. Each of the zodiacal signs has certain qualities and influences of its own. For example, Aries is a vernal, hot, dry, fiery, cardinal, masculine, equinoctial, movable, diurnal, eastern, commanding, northern, choleric, luxuriant, violent, four-footed, fortunate, hoarse sign. It is the day house of Mars and the exaltation of the sun (in 19°).

Taurus is a vernal, cold, dry, earthy, melancholy, feminine, fixed, nocturnal, crooked, commanding, northern, four-footed, hoarse sign. It is the night house of Venus and the exaltation of the Moon (in 3°). When it is "in the ascendant" — that is, just ascending on the eastern horizon — at the moment of any person's birth, the native will have a broad forehead, thick nostrils and lips, dark curly hair; will be dull and unfeeling, slow to anger and rather melancholy; but if once provoked, very malicious. It governs the neck and throat; and its diseases are consumption, scrofula, croup, melancholy, quinsy, and wens on the neck, etc. It governs Ireland, parts of Poland and Russia, Holland, Persia, Asia Minor, and various other countries. Similar characteristic influences are ascribed to the other signs.

Mansions. — Each sign is the "mansion," or "house," of one of the planets; the Sun and the Moon having one house each; the other planets two, a day house and a night house. Thus the day house of Mars is Aries, and the night house Scorpius; and the day house of Venus is Libra, and the night house Taurus. When a planet is situated in its house it is supposed to exercise a particularly strong influence. Each of the signs, except Leo, Scorpius, and Aquarius — or, more strictly a particular degree in each — is also called the "exaltation" of one of the planets or of the Dragon's Head or the Dragon's Tail; and in like manner each of them, except Taurus, Leo and Aquarius, is called the "fall" of one of the bodies just mentioned. Thus the Moon is in its exaltation when situated in the 3° of Taurus; Mars is in his fall when in the 28° of Cancer. In counting the "dignities" or powers of a planet an exaltation is a "dignity" of four degrees; and a fall, a "debility" of four.

Divisions of the Signs. — For the further complication of the matter, each sign is divided into five unequal parts, called "terms," and also into three equal parts, called "faces." Each term and each face has its lord, which has a dignity of two degrees when situated in its term, and of one when situated in its face. Thus in Aries the terms and their lords are: 1° – 6°, Jupiter; 7°–12°, Venus; 13°–20°, Mercury; 21°–25°, Mars; 26°–30°, Saturn. The faces of Aries, with their lords, are: 1°–10°, Mars; 11°–20°, Sun; 21°–30°, Venus. A further

dignity of three degrees is conferred by a "triplicity," that is, a combination of three signs, 120° apart.

Other Dignities. — Besides these "essential dignities" dependent upon the absolute situation of a planet, there are twenty-one others, dependent upon various features of its situation or motion, and varying in value from 5° to 1°.

When a sign is in the ascendant, the "lord of the ascendant" — that is, the planet whose mansion the sign is — is of especial importance; and the strength of his influence depends upon his dignities. That is, if he is in his own house at the time, or "in mutual reception by house" — that is, in another house situated so as to be in favorable aspect and belonging to a planet then situated in the first planet's house — he has a dignity or power of 5°. In like manner, if he is in the midheaven, or more than $8\frac{1}{2}°$ from the sun (not "combust"), or less than 17′ from it ("in Cazimi"), he has a dignity of 5°; and if he is "direct" and "swift of motion," and "increasing in light," he has additional dignities of 4°, 2°, and 2°. A planet situated in a sign where it has no essential dignity of any kind and is not in reception with any other planet is called "peregrine" — a condition which involves a debility of 5°. But the details of this matter are too numerous and too complicated to be fully explained here.

Aspects. — Most important for the influences of the planets are the aspects, or familiarities. According to Ptolemy these are six in number: conjunction, when two planets are within half the distance of the sum of their orbs; opposition, when they are 180° apart; trine aspect, or 120° apart; quartile, or 90° apart; and sextile, or 60° apart. Of these, the conjunction is good with good stars and bad with evil ones; the opposition is always an evil aspect. Trine is the best aspect of all; sextile is also good, but is not so powerful; and quartile is evil, but in a secondary degree. Properly, of course, conjunction is not an "aspect," for the planets in conjunction cannot *look toward* each other.

Houses

In astrology there are two kinds of houses, "mundane" and "planetary." Although these are entirely different from one

another they are sometimes confused by persons unfamiliar with the subject.

Planetary Houses or Mansions. — Planetary houses are the signs of the zodiac; which, as has already been said, are distributed among the planets as houses, or mansions. The signs of the zodiac belong to what the astrologers call the essential nature of the circle, "esse circuli essentiale."

Mundane Houses. — The mundane houses — which are changeable features of the circle or ecliptic, "esse circuli accidentale" — are formed by dividing the whole expanse of the firmament into twelve parts. The authorities differed much as to the method of making this division. That expounded by Alcabitius was, I fancy, chiefly followed in Chaucer's day. This can perhaps best be understood by imagining the ecliptic belt to be cut into parts by several planes. First imagine a plane passing through the poles of the celestial equator and the zenith, and cutting the firmament into two equal parts. Each of these parts is in turn divided into two parts by another plane passing also through the poles and the points at which the ecliptic cuts the circle of the horizon. Each of the four segments thus produced is further divided into three inequal parts, according to the obliquity of ascension of the ascendant, by planes also passing through the poles. The twelve divisions or "houses," thus constituted do not revolve with the daily revolution of the *primum mobile*, but are fixed areas through which the heavenly bodies move in their revolutions.

Beginning at the eastern horizon and counting in the direction opposite to the apparent motion of the fixed stars, the mundane houses are numbered in succession from one to twelve. Thus No. 1 lies just below the eastern horizon, No. 6 just below the western; No. 7 just above the western horizon, and No. 12 just above the eastern. Any celestial body, therefore — and every sign of the zodiac — is by the daily revolution of the *primum mobile* moved through these houses in reverse order of their numbers; moving from the ascendent on the eastern horizon successively through the twelfth, eleventh, tenth, ninth, eighth, and seventh houses to sink beneath the western horizon. The zenith, or midpoint of the heavens, marks the division between the tenth and ninth houses.

Different degrees of influence and of effects, beneficial or injurious, are ascribed to the various mundane houses. The order of houses in dignity and strength, or rather of the planets when in them, is as follows: tenth, first, seventh, fourth, eleventh, fifth, ninth, third, second, eighth, sixth, and twelfth.

The houses are further grouped in sets of three; the first in each group being called an angle; the second, a succeedent; the third, a cadent. Thus houses 1, 4, 7, and 10 are angles, 2, 5, 8, and 11 are succeedents, and 3, 6, 9, and 12 are cadents. When in the 'Man of Law's Tale' (II, 302–304) Chaucer says

> Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
> Of which the lord is helplees falle, allas!
> Out of his angle into the derkeste hous,

he tells us that: (1) the sign of the zodiac just ascending on the eastern horizon was an unfortunate one; (2) that, because of its position in the ecliptic, it ascended obliquely, i.e., was tortuous; (3) that the lord of it — that is, the planet whose mansion it was — had passed from a position in one of the four angles (mundane houses Nos. 1, 4, 7, and 10) into one of the cadent houses (Nos. 12, 3, 6, and 9). Perhaps, having been situated in house No. 1, an angle, it has, by the diurnal revolution of the *primum mobile*, been moved into the 12th house — which is a cadent, and as will be seen from the list given above, the darkest or most unfortunate of all the houses.

Genethliacal and Horary Astrology. — The two main branches of judicial astrology are called "genethliacal" and "horary." Genethliacal astrology has reference to the determination of a person's character and fortunes from the positions of the heavenly bodies at the moment of his birth. Horary astrology is the art of choosing suitable times for important undertakings. This choice, or "election," depends primarily upon the situation at birth, called the *root*, and consists in finding a time when the celestial bodies dominating the birth shall be in a favorable situation for the particular kind of undertaking contemplated. Thus in the passage from the 'Man of Law's Tale' just cited — see particularly ll. 309–315 — the emperor of Rome is reproached, not only for his negligence in not learning through expert astrologers that the time when his daughter

began her journey was astrologically unsuitable, but for failing to ascertain on the basis of the root of her birth — which of course would be accurately known in the case of a person of high condition, as she was — what time would be propitious for undertaking a voyage. The principal element in such a calculation would be the position of the Hylech, or *locus vitae*, or perhaps of the Alcochoden, or *dator annorum vitae*, either of which, according to circumstances, might be the Sun, the Moon, the degree of the ascendent, or various other celestial bodies.

Planetary Days and Hours. — Each day of the week was assigned to one of the planets, as being under its special domination. Thus Sunday was assigned to the Sun; Monday to the Moon; Tuesday (*Martis dies*) to Mars; Wednesday (*Mercurii dies*) to Mercury; Thursday (*Jovis dies*) to Jupiter; Friday (*Veneris dies*) to Venus; and Saturday to Saturn.

But a still more specific assignment of time was made. The day was divided into twenty-four portions, called "planetary hours," or "inequal hours" (*horae inaequales*), each of which was assigned to the special influence of one of the planets. These were the "houres" in which the doctor watched ("kepte") his patients (I, 415 f.). Chaucer explains them in his treatise on the *Astrolabe*, ii, §§ 7–12.

The length of the inequal hours varies from day to day; and is different for the day and night, except at the equinoxes. To ascertain the inequal hours of any particular day divide the time from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal parts. These will be the inequal hours of the day. The division of the time from sunset to sunrise will give the inequal hours of the night. These inequal hours are assigned to the planets in order; beginning with the first hour after sunrise, which is assigned to the planet governing the day. The order of the planets for the assignment of the inequal hours is: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon. This order is easily remembered in either of two ways: (1) It is the order of the planets themselves, beginning with the most distant. (2) It can also be obtained from the days of the week taken in the order 7, 5, 3, 1, 6, 4, 2. To ascertain which planet controls a given hour of a given day, divide the number of the hour by seven and assign the remaining hours to the planets in the

order stated above, beginning with the one that controls the day. For example, if it is desired to know which planet governs the nineteenth hour of a Friday, divide 19 by 7, which leaves a remainder of 5. The first of the five hours in the remainder will go to Venus, the next to Mercury, the next to the moon, the next to Saturn, and the next or nineteenth to Jupiter.

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[FRAGMENT I (GROUP A)

PROLOGUE]

Here bygynneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury.

Whan that Aprille with hise shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne;
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye —
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly, blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felaweshipe; and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,

And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon.
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take oure wey ther-as I yow devyse.

But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to reson
To telle yow al the condicion
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they werë, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a Knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That, fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce —
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,

Agayn another hethen in Turkye.
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys;
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
He was a verray, parfit, gentil knyght.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors weren goode, but he was nat gay;
Of fustian he wered a gypon
Al bismotered with his habergeon;
For he was late ycome from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER —
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie;
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he as it were a meede,
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne with sleves longe and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koude songes make, and wel endite,
Juste, and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.
So hoote he lovede that by nyghtertale
He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

A YEMAN hadde he, and servantz namo
At that tyme, for hym liste ride soo.

And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly —
Hise arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe —
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wŏŏdecraft wel koude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler;
And on that oother syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophère on his brest, of silver sheene;
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene.
A forster was he soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy.
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she soong the servicé dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semeely;
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly —
After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel ytaught was she withalle:
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
Wel koude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe
That no drope ne fille upon hire brist —
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir list;
Hire over-lippe wyped she so clene
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte;
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.
And sikerly, she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port;
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,

And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel breed;
But soore wepte she if any of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte.
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was;
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed —
It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For hardily she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia.*

Another NONNE with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapeleyne, and PREESTES thre.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie;
An outridere, that lovede venerie;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable;
And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere
Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere,
And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle
Ther-as this lord was kepere of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure, or of seint Benet,
Bycause that it was old, and somdel streit —
This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen

That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
Ne that a monk whan he is recchelees
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees —
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre;
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre.
And I seyde his opinion was good;
What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood,
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handes, and laboure
As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prikasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight.
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust; for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves ypurfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And for to festne his hood under his chyn,
He hadde of gold ywroght a ful curious pyn —
A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas —
And eek his face, as it hadde been enoynt;
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt.
Hise eyen stepe — and rollynge in his heed —
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelaat;
He was nat pale, as a forpyned goost —
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A Frere ther was, a wantowne and a merye;
A lymytour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan
So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.
Unto his ordre he was a noble post,
And wel biloved and famulier was he

With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And with worthy wommen of the toun;
For he hadde power of confessioun,
As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetely herde he confession,
And plesaunt was his absolucion;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther-as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
For unto a poure ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel yshryve,
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt;
For many a man so harde is of his herte
He may nat wepe althogh hym soore smerte,—
Therfore, instede of wepynge and preyeres,
Men moote yeve silver to the poure freres.
His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pynnes, for to yeven yonge wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a murye note;
Wel koude he synge, and pleyen on a rote;
Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.
His nekke whit was as the flourdelys;
Therto he strong was as a champion.
He knew the tavernes wel in al the toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For unto swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with sike lazars aqueyntance.
It is nat honeste — it may nat avance —
For to deelen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And over-al, ther-as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was and lowely of servyse.
Ther nas no man, nowher, so vertuous —
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*

Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente —
(His purchas was wel bettre than his rente);
And rage he koude as it were right a whelpe.
In love dayes ther koude he muchel helpe;
For there he was nat lyk a cloysterer,
With a thredbare cope, as is a poure scoler,
But he was lyk a maister, or a pope.
Of double worstede was his semycope,
That rounded as a belle, out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge.
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
Hise eyen twynkled in his heed aryght
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A Marchant was ther, with a forked berd,
In motlee; and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bevere hat;
His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.
Hise resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge alway thencrees of his wynnyng.
He wolde the see were kept for anything
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce
With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man with alle;
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.
As leene was his hors as is a rake;
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
But looked holwe, and ther-to sobrely.
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office;

For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie
Than robes riche, or fithele, or sautrie.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
On bookes and his lernynge he it spente;
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye;
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede.
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede;
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short, and quyk, and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche;
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence —
He semed swich, hise wordes weren so wise.
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun.
For his science, and for his heigh renoun,
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:
Al was fee symple to hym in effect;
His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas;
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from the tyme of kyng William were falle.
Therto he koude endite and make a thyng,
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng.
And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly, in a medlee cote,
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A Frankeleyn was in his compaignye.
Whit was his berd as is a dayesye;
Of his complexion he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn;
To lyven in delit was evere his wone;
For he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinion that pleyn delit
Was verraily felicitee parfit.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian was he in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alweys after oon;
A bettre envyned man was nevere noon;
Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,
Of fissh and flessh, and that so plentevous
It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke —
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke,
After the sondry sesons of the yeer;
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharpe, and redy al his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessions ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas, and a gipser al of silk,
Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour.
Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.

An Haberdasshere, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapycer —
And they were clothed alle in o lyveree,
Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.
Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was:
Hir knyves were chaped, noght with bras,
But al with silver; wroght ful clene and weel
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.

Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,
Was shaply for to been an alderman;
For catel hadde they ynogh, and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certeyn were they to blame —
It is ful fair to been ycleped *Madame*,
And goon to vigiliés al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

A Cook they haddé with hem, for the nones,
To boille the chiknes, with the marybones
And poudre marchant tart and galyngale.
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Máken mórtreux, and wel báke a pýe;
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A Shipman was ther, wonynge fer by weste;
For aught I woot he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthe,
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hóote sómer hadde máad his hewe al broun;
And certeinly he was a good felawe:
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe
Fro Burdeux ward, whil that the chapman sleepe.
Of nyce conscience took he no keepe:
If that he faught and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft, to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was and wys, to undertake.
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

He knew alle the havenes, as they were,
Fro Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere;
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisik.
In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik—
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres by his magyk natureel;
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient;
He knew the cause of everich maladye —
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye —
And where they engendred, and of what humour;
He was a verray, parfit praktisour.
The cause yknowe and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.
Ful redy hadde he hise apothecaries
To sende him drogges and his letuaries;
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne —
Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis, and Avycen,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he;
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissyng and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but esy of dispence,
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial;
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

A Good Wif was ther, of biside Bathe;
But she was somdel deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth makyng she hadde swich an haunt
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground —
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve;
Housbondes at chirchë dorë she haddë fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She haddë passed many a straunge strem —
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat-tothëd was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hipes large;
And on hire feet a paire of spóres sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love she knew *per chaunce*,
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a poure Person of a toun;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
Hise párisshéns devoutly wolde he teche;

Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient,
And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.
Ful looth were hym to cursen for hise tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his poure parisshens aboute
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce;
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf,
That 'firste he wroghte and afterward that he taughte.'
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto:
That 'if gold rusté, what shal iren doo?'
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is — if a prest také keep —
A filthy shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
By his clennesse how that his sheep sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre
And ran to London, unto Seint Poules,
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelleth at hoom and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie.
He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was to synful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his techyng discreet and benygne;
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse, —
But it were any persone obstinat,

What-so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.
He waitede after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spiced conscience;
But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselve.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother;
A trewe swynkere and a good was he,
Lyvynge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best, with al his hoole herte,
At allé tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte;
And thanne his neighébore right as hymselve:
He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every poure wight
Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.
Hise tithes paydë he ful faire and wel
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a reve, and a millere;
A somnour, and a pardoner also;
A maunciple, and myself — ther were namo.

The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;
Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;
Ther was no dore that he ne wolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a rennyng, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And therto brood as though it were a spade.
Upon the cope right of his nose he hadé
A werte; and theron stood a toft of herys
Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
Hise nosethirles blake were and wyde.

A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys;
He was a janglere, and a goliardeys —
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a Temple,
Of which achatours myghte take exemple
For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;
For wheither that he payde or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his achaat
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious —
Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
(To maken hym lyve by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but-if he were wood,
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;)
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any caas that myghte falle or happe —
And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe!

The REVE was a sclendre, colerik man;
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;
His heer was by his erys round yshorn;
His tope was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Ylyk a staf; ther was no calf ysene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;
Ther was noon auditour koude of him wynne.
Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn

The yeldynge of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye
Was hoolly in this Reves governyng;
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age.
Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage;
Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne —
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;
With grene trees shadwed was his place.
He koude bettre than his lord purchace;
Ful riche he was astored pryvely.
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,
And have a thank and yet a gowne and hood.
In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This Reve sat upon a ful good stot
That was al pomely grey and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute;
And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

A Somonour was ther with us in that place;
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,
With scaled browes blake, and piled berd.
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quyksilver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That hym myghte helpen of the whelkes white
Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.

Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes;
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he — two or thre —
That he had lerned out of som decree —
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
Kan clepen *Watte* as wel as kan the pope.
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie.
Ay, questio: quid iuris! wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde.
A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde:
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-monthe and excuse hym atte fulle;
And prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.
And if he foond owher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have noon awe,
In swich caas, of the ercedekenes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.
'Purs is the ercedekenes helle,' seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede.
Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede;
For curs wol slee, right as assoillyng savith —
And also war him of a *Significavit!*
In daunger hadde he at his owene gise
The yonge girles of the diocise;
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale stake;
A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake.

With hym ther was a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer;
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.

Ful loude he soong, '*Com hider, love, to me!*'
This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex;
But smothe it heeng, as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge hise lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he hise shuldres overspradde;
But thynne it lay, by colpons, oon and oon.
But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet;
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet —
Dischevelee save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe;
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot —
No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;
As smothe it was as it were late shave;
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner;
For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer
Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl;
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That Seint Peter hadde whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jesu Crist hym hente;
He hadde a croys of laton, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes whan that he fond
A poure person dwellynge upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus with feyned flaterye and japes
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel koude he rede a lesson or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie;

For wel he wistĕ, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affile his tonge
To wynne silver — ás he fúl wel koude;
Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you — shortly, in a clause —
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke nyght,
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,
That ye narette it nat my vileynye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
For this ye knowen al so wel as I:
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as evere he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche or large;
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.
Eek Plato seith — whoso that kan hym rede —
'The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.'
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chiere made oure Hoost us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon.

He served us with vitaille at the beste;
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.
A semely man oure Hooste was withalle
For to been a marchal in an halle.
A large man he was, with eyen stepe —
A fairer burgeys was ther noon in Chepe —
Boold of his speche, and wys, and well ytaught;
And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a myrie man;
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of myrthe, amonges othere thynges —
Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges —
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordynges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome, hertely;
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye
Atones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
'Ye goon to Caunterbury — God yow speede!
The blisful martir quite yow youre meede! —
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely confort ne myrthe is noon
To ride by the weye doumb as the stoon.
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow liketh alle, by oon assent,
For to stonden at my juggement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
Tomorwe whan ye riden by the weye,
Now by my fader soule that is deed,
But if ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed!
Hoold up youre hond, withouten moore speche!'
Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche —
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys —
And graunted hym withouten moore avys,
And bad him seye his voirdit as hym leste.

'Lordynges,' quod he, 'now herkneth, for the beste;
But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn.
This is the poynt — to speken short and pleyn —
That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye —
To Caunterbury ward, I mene it so;
And homward he shal tellen othere two —
Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle —
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
Tales of best sentence and moost solaas —
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to makē yow the moorē mury,
I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde.
And whoso wole my juggement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore.'
This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore
With ful glad herte; and preyden hym also
That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so;
And that he wolde been oure governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris;
And we wol reuled been at his devys
In heigh and lough. And thus by oon assent,
We been acorded to his juggement.
And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
We drónken, and to resté wente echon
Withouten ány lenger taryynge.
Amorwē, whan that day gan for to sprynge,
Up roos oure Hoost, and was oure aller cok;
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok;
And forth we riden a litel moore than paas
Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas.

And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste,
And seyde, 'Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste!
Ye woot youre foreward and it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song accorde,
Lat se now who shal tellę the firstę tale.
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my juggement
Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
Sire Knyght,' quod he, 'my mayster and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady Prioresse.
And ye, sire Clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth noght. Ley hond to, every man.'
Anon to drawen every wight bigan;
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the Knyght —
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght —
And telle he moste his tale, as was reson,
By foreward and by composicion,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
He seydė, 'Syn I shal bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde and herkneth what I seye.'
And with that word we rỹden forth oure weye;
And he bigan, with right a myrie cheere,
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

Here bigynneth the Knyghtes Tale.

Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duc that highte Theseus.
Of Atthenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tymė swich a conquerour

That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
Ful many a riché contree hadde he wonne;
What with his wysdom and his chivalrie,
He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
That whilom was ycleped Scithia;
And weddede the queene, Ypolita,
And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee,
And eek hir faire suster Emelye.
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duc to Atthenes ryde,
And al his hoost in armes hym bisyde.
And certes, if it nere to long to heere,
I wolde have toold yow fully the manere
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
By Theseus and by his chivalrye;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bitwixen Atthenès and Amazones;
And how asseged was Ypolita,
The fairé, hardy queene of Scithia;
And of the feste that was at hir weddynge;
And of the tempest at hir hoom comynge.
But al that thyng I moot as now forbere;
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough;
The remenant of the tale is long ynough.
I wól nat létten eék nóon of this róute;
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat se now who shal the soper wynne.
And ther I lefte I wol ayeyn bigynne.
This duc of whom I make mencioun,
Whan he was come almoost unto the toun,
In al his wele and in his mooste pride,
He was war, as he cáste his eye aside,
Where that ther kneled in the hye weye
A compaignye of ladyes, tweye and tweye,
Ech after oother, clad in clothes blake.
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make
That in this world nys creature lyvynge

That herde swich another waymentynge;
And of this cry they nolde nevere stenten
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.
'What folk been ye that at myn hom comynge
Perturben so my feste with criynge?'
Quod Theseus. 'Have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?
Or who hath yow mysboden or offended?
And telleth me if it may been amended,
And why that ye been clothed thus in blak.'
The eldeste lady of hem alle spak,
Whan she hadde swowned with a deedly cheere,
That it was routhe for to seen and heere,
And seyde, 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yeven
Victorie, and as a conqueror to lyven,
Nat greveth us youre glorie and youre honour;
But we biseken mercy and socour.
Have mercy on oure wo and oure distresse!
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
Upon us wrecched wommen lat thou falle!
For certes, lord, ther is noon of us alle
That she ne hath been a duchesse or a queene.
Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene,
Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel,
That noon estat assureth to be weel.
And certes, lord, to abyden youre presence
Heere in the temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waitynge al this fourtenyght.
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy myght!
'I wrecche, which that wepe and crie thus,
Was whilom wyf to kyng Cappaneus,
That starf at Thebes — cursed be that day!
And alle we that been in this array
And maken al this lamentacioun,
We losten alle oure housbondes at that toun,
Whil that the seege theraboute lay.
And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,

He for despit and for his tirannye,
To do the dede bodyes vileynye
Of álle oure lórdes, whiché that been slawe,
(He) hath alle the bodyes on an heepe ydrawe;
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
Neither to been yburyed nor ybrent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despit.'
And with that word, withouten moore respit,
They fillen gruf, and criden pitously,
'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,
And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte!'
This gentil duc doun from his courser sterte
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
Hym thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and só maat
That whilom weren of so greet estaat;
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knyght,
He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght
Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke
That all the peple of Grece sholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus yserved,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
And right anoon, withouten moore abood,
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes ward, and al his hoost biside.
No neer Atthenes wolde he go ne ride,
Ne take his esẽ fully half a day,
But onward on his wey that nyght he lay;
And sente anon Ypolita the queene
And Emelye, hir yonge suster sheene,
Unto the toun of Atthenes to dwelle,
And forth he rit; ther is namoore to telle.
The redẽ statue of Mars with spere and targe
So shyneth in his white baner large
That alle the feeldes glyteren up and doun;
And by his baner born is his penoun
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete

The Mynotaur, which that he slough in Crete.
Thus rit this duc; thus rit this conquerour,
And in his hoost of chivalrie the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes and alighte
Faire in a feeld, ther-as he thoughte fighte.
But shortly for to speken of this thyng,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes kyng,
He faught, and slough hym manly as a knyght
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flyght;
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wall and sparre and rafter.
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that weren slayn,
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to longe for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentynge
That the ladyes made at the brennynge
Of the bodies, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Dooth to the ladyes whan they from hym wente —
But shortly for to telle is myn entente.
Whan that this worthy duc, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feeld he took al nyght his reste, —
And dide with al the contree as hym leste.
To ransake in the taas of bodyes dede,
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours diden bisynesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture.
And so bifel that in the taas they founde,
Thurgh-girt with many a grevous blody wounde,
Two yonge knyghtes, liggynge by and by,
Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely;
Of whiche two Arcita highte that oon,
And that oother knyght highte Palamon.
Nat fully quyke ne fully dede they were;
But by here cote-armures and by hir gere
The heraudes knewe hem best in special
As they that weren of the blood roial

Of Thebes and of sustren two yborn.
Out of the taas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe unto the tente
Of Theseus; and ful soone he hem sente
To Atthenes, to dwellen in prison
Perpetuelly — he nolde no raunson.
And whan this worthy duc hath thus ydon,
He took his hoost and hoom he rood anon,
With laurer crowned as a conquerour.
And ther he lyveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lyve; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in angwissh and in wo,
This Palamon and his felawe Arcite
For everemoore; ther may no gold hem quite.
This passeth yeer by yeer and day by day,
Till it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye that fairer was to sene
Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe —
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
I noot which was the fyner of hem two —
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
She was arisen and al redy dight;
For May wole have no slogardrie a-nyght.
The seson priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh hym out of his slepe to sterte,
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observance!'
This maked Emelye have remembrance
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Yclothed was she fressh for to devyse.
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardyn, at the sonne upriste,
She walketh up and doun, and as hire liste,
She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
To make a subtil gerland for hire hede;
And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and stroong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeon,

Ther-as the knyghtes weren in prison,
Of whiche I tolde yow and tellen shal,
Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal
Ther-as this Emelye hadde hir pleyynge.
Bright was the sonne and cleer that morwenynge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner —
As was his wone, bi leve of his gayler —
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardyn, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the sheene
Was in hire walk and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, romynge to and fro,
And to hymself compleynynge of his wo.
That he was born ful ofte he seyde, 'Allas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a wyndow, thikke of many a barre
Of iren, greet and square as any sparre,
He cast his eye upon Emelya
And therwithal he bleynte and cride, 'A!'
As though he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that cry, Arcite anon up sterte,
And seyde, 'Cosyn myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why cridestow? who hath thee doon offence?
For Goddes love, taak al in pacience
Oure prison, for it may noon oother be.
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee;
Som wikke aspect or disposicion
Of Saturne, by sum constellacion,
Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn.
So stood the hevene whan that we were born;
We moste endure, this is the short and playn.'
This Palamon answerde, and seyde agayn,
'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinion
Thow hast a veyn ymaginacion.
This prison caused me nat for to crye,
But I was hurt right now thrughout myn eye

Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardyn romen to and fro
Is cause of al my criyng and my wo.
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse,
But Venus is it soothly, as I gesse.'
And therwithal on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde, 'Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful, wrecche creature,
Out of this prison helpe that we may scapen.
And if so be my destynee be shapen
By eterne word to dyen in prison,
Of oure lynage have som compassion,
That is so lowe ybroght by tirannyé.'
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte, hir beautee hurte hym so
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or moore.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously,
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place;
And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hire, atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther is namoore to seye!'
This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he looked, and answerde,
'Wheither seistow this in ernest or in pley?'
'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in ernest, by my fey!
God helpe me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'
This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye;
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traitour,
To me, that am thy cosyn, and thy brother
Ysworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,
That nevere, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that deéth departè shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hyndre oother,

Ne in noon oother cas, my leeve brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, as I shal forthren thee.
This was thyn ooth and myn also certeyn;
I woot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute,
And now thow woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve
And evere shal til that myn herte sterve.
Nay, certes, false Arcite, thow shalt nat so!
I loved hire first; and tolde thee my wo,
As to my conseil, and to my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have toold biforn;
For which thou art ybounden as a knyght
To helpen me, if it lay in thy myght;
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'
This Arcite ful proudly spak ageyn;
'Thow shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;
And thou art fals, I telle thee outrely!
For *paramour* I loved hire first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? Thou wistest nat yet now
Wheither she be a womman or goddesse.
Thyn is affeccion of hoolynesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure,
As to my cosyn and my brother sworn.
'I pose that thow lovedest hire biforn.
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That 'Who shal yeve a lovere any lawe?'
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve of any erthely man;
And therfore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broken al day for love, in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
He may nat flee it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or wydwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat likly al thy lyf
To stonden in hir grace — namoore shal I;
For wel thou woost thyselven verraily

That thou and I be dampned to prison
Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunson. 1176
We stryven as dide the houndes for the boon;
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;
Ther cam a kyte, whil they weren so wrothe,
And baar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe. 1180
And therfore, at the kynges court, my brother,
Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother.
Love, if thee list; for I love, and ay shal.
And soothly, leeve brother, this is al: 1184
Heere in this prison moote we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.'

Greet was the strif, and long, bitwix hem tweye,
If that I hadde leyser for to seye. 1188
But to theffect: it happed on a day —
To telle it yow as shortly as I may —
A worthy duc that highte Perotheus,
That felawe was to this duc Theseus 1192
Syn thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Atthenes his felawe to visite,
And for to pleye, as he was wone to do;
For in this world he loved no man so — 1196
And he loved hym als tendrely agayn.
So wel they lovede, as olde bookes sayn,
That whan that oon was deed, soothly to telle,
His felawe wente and soughte hym doun in helle. 1200
But of that storie list me nat to write.
Duc Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde hym knowe at Thebes, yeer by yere.
And finally, at requeste and preyere 1204
Of Perotheus, withouten any raunson,
Duc Theseus hym leet out of prison
Frely to goon wher that hym liste over-al,
In swich a gyse as I you tellen shal. 1208
This was the forward, pleynly for tendite,
Bitwixen Theseus and hym Arcite:
That if so were that Arcite were yfounde
Evere in his lif, by day, or nyght, o stounde, 1212

In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed.
Ther nas noon oother remedie ne reed;
But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde.
Lat hym be war, his nekke lith to wedde.
How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte smyte.
He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously;
To sleen hym self he waiteth prively.
He seyde, 'Allas, that day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than biforn.
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle,
Nat in my purgatorie, but in helle.
Allás, that evere knew I Perótheus!
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus,
Yfetered in his prison everemo.
Thanne hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.
Oonly the sighte of hire whom that I serve,
Though that I nevere hir grace may deserve,
Wolde han suffised right ynough for me.
O deere cosyn Palamon,' quod he,
'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure!
Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure —
In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
Wel hath Fortune yturned thee the dys.
That hast the sighte of hire, and I thabsence.
For possible is — syn thou hast hire presence,
And art a knyght, a worthy and an able —
That by som cas, syn Fortune is chaungeable,
Thow maist to thy desir som tyme atteyne.
But I, that am exiled and bareyne
Of alle grace, and in so greet dispeir
That ther nys erthe, water, fir, ne eir,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me heele or doon confort in this —
Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse.
Farwel my lif, my lust, and my gladnesse!
Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune

On purvieaunce of God or of Fortune,
That yeveth hem ful ofte, in many a gyse,
Wel bettre than they kan hemself devyse.
Som man desireth for to han richesse,
That cause is of his moerdre, or greet siknesse;
And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.
Infinite harmes been in this mateere;
We witen nat what thing we preyen heere.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous:
A dronke man woot wel he hath an hous;
But he noot which the righte wey is thider,
And to a dronke man the wey is slider.
And certes in this world so faren we;
We seken faste after felicitee,
But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.
Thus may we seyen alle; and namely I,
That wende and hadde a greet opinion
That if I myghte escapen from prison,
Thanne hadde I been in joye and perfit heele,
That now I am exiled fro my wele.
Syn that I may nat seen you, Emelye,
I nam but deed; ther nys no remedye.
Upon that oother syde, Palamon,
Whan that he wisté Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh that the grete tour
Resouned of his youlyng and clamour.
The pure fettres on his shynes grete
Weren of his bittre, salte teeres wete.
'Allas,' quod he, 'Arcita, cosyn myn,
Of al oure strif, God woot, the frut is thyn.
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thow yevest litel charge.
Thou mayst, syn thou hast wysdom and manhede,
Assemblen alle the folk of oure kynrede,
And make a werre so sharpe on this citee
That by som aventure or som tretee
Thow mayst have hire to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I moste nedes lese my lyf.

For, as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage —
Moore than is myn that sterve here in a cage.
For I moot wepe and wayle whil I lyve
With al the wo that prison may me yeve;
And eek with peyne that love me yeveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.'
Therwith the fyr of jalousie up sterte
Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So woodly that he lyk was to biholde
The boxtree or the asshen dede and colde.
Thanne seyde he, 'O crúeel goddes that governe
This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,
And wríten in the table of atthamaunt
Youre parlement and youre eterne graunt,
What is mankyndé moore untó you holde
Than is the sheepe that rouketh in the folde?
For slayn is man right as another beest,
And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,
And hath siknesse and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, *pardee*.
What governance is in this prescience
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
And yet encresseth this al my penaunce
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther-as a beest may al his lust fulfille;
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;
But after hís deeth man moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he havè care and wo;
Withouten doutë it may stonden so.
The answere of this I lete to dyvýnys,
But well I woot that in this world greet pyne ys.
Allas! I se a serpent, or a theef
That many a trewè man hath doon mescheef,
Goon at his large and, where hym list, may turne;
But I moot been in prison thurgh Saturne,
And eek thurgh Juno, jalous and eek wood,

That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes, with hise waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that oother syde
For jalousie and fere of hym Arcite.'
  Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite,
And lete hym in his prison stille dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.
  The sommer passeth, and the nyghtes longe
Encressen double wise the peynes stronge
Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofuller mester;
For, shortly for to seyn, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is dampned to prison,
In cheynes and in fettres to been deed;
And Arcite is exiled upon his heed
Foreveremo, as out of that contree,
Ne neveremo he shal his lady see.

  Yow loveres axe I now this question,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
That oon may seen his lady day by day
But in prison he moot dwelle alway;
That oother wher hym list may ride or go,
But seen his lady shal he neveremo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that kan,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

  Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde, 'Allas!'
For seen his lady shal he neveremo.
And shortly to concluden al his wo,
So muche sorwe hadde nevere creature
That is, or shal, whil that the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drynke, is hym biraft,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft;
Hise eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
His hewe falow, and pale as asshen colde;

And solitarie he was, and evere allone,
And waillynge al the nyght, makynge his mone;
And if he herde song or instrument,
Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghte nat be stent.
So féble eek wére hise spíritz, ánd so lowe,
And chaunged so that no man koudè knowe
His spechè nor his voys, though men it herde;
And in his geere, for al the world he ferde,
Nat oonly lik the loveris maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye,
Engéndred, of humoúr maléncolík,
Biforn his owene celle fantastik.
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe hábit ánd eek dísposicioun
Of hym, this woful lovere, Daun Arcite.
What sholde I al day of his wo endite?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This crueel torment and this peyne and woo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Upon a nyght, in sleepe as he hym leyde,
Hym thoughte how that the wynged god Mercurie
Biforn hym stood, and bad hym to be murie.
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede upon hise heris brighte.
Arrayed was this god, as I took keep,
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep;
And seyde hym thus: 'To Atthenes shaltou wende.
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
And with that word, Arcite wook, and sterte.
'Now trewely, hou soore that me smerte,'
Quod he, 'to Atthénes right now wól I fare,
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To se my lady, that I love and serve;
In hire presence I recche nat to sterve.'
And with that word, he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour;
And saugh his visage ál in anóther kynde.
And right anon it ran hym in his mynde,
That sith his facè was so disfigúred

Of maladye the which he hadde endured,
He myghte wel, if that he bar hym lowe,
Lyve in Atthenes everemoore unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array,
And cladde hym as a poure laborer;
And al allone, save oonly a squier
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgised pourely as he was,
To Atthenes is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente upon a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse,
To drugge and drawe, what-so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn,
The which that dwellynge was with Emelye;
For he was wys, and koude soone espye
Of every servant which that serveth here.
Wel koude he hewen wode and water bere,
For he was yong and myghty for the nones,
And therto he was long, and big of bones,
To doon that any wight kan hym devyse.
A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
And Philostrate he seyde that he highte.
But half so wel biloved a man as he
Ne was ther nevere in court of his degree.
He was so gentil of his condicioun
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden that it were a charitee
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
And putten hym in worshipful servyse,
Ther-as he myghte his vertu excercise.
And thus withinne a while his name is spronge,
Bothe of hise dedes and his goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken hym so neer
That of his chambre he made hym a squier,
And gaf him gold to mayntene his degree.
And eek men broghte hym out of his contree,

From yeer to yeer, ful pryvely, his rente;
But honestly and slyly he it spente,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yeer in this wise his lif he ladde,
And bar hym so in pees and eek in werre,
Ther was no man that Theseus hath derre.
And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
And speke I wole of Palamon a lite.

In derknesse and horrible and strong prison
Thise seven yeer hath seten Palamon,
Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse.
Who feeleth double soor and hevynesse
But Palamon? that love destreyneth so
That wood out of his wit he goth for wo.
And eek therto, he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yer.
Who koude ryme in Englyssh proprely
His martirdom? For sothe it am nat I.
Therfore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fel that in the seventhe yer, in May,
The thridde nyght, as olde bookes seyn,
That al this storie tellen moore pleyn,
Were it by aventure or destynee —
As whan a thyng is shapen, it shal be —
That soone after the mydnyght Palamon,
By helpyng of a freend, brak his prison,
And fleeth the citee faste as he may go.
For he hade yeve his gayler drynke so
Of a clarree maad of a certeyn wyn,
Of nercotikes, and opie of Thebes fyn,
That al that nyght thogh that men wolde hym shake,
The gayler sleep, he myghte nat awake.
And thus he fleeth as faste as evere he may.
The nyght was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes cost he moot hymselven hyde;
And til a grove, faste ther bisyde,
With dredeful foot thanne stalketh Palamon.
For, shortly, this was his opinion,

That in that grove he wolde hym hyde al day,
And in the nyght thanne wolde he take his way
To Thebes ward, his freendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
And shortly, outher he wolde lese his lif
Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.
This is theffect and his entente pleyn.
Now wol I turne to Arcite ageyn,
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that Fortune had broght him in the snare.

The bisy larke, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,
And firy Phebus riseth up so brighte
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with hise stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes hangynge on the leves.
And Arcita, that is in the court roial
With Theseus, his squier principal,
Is risen, and looketh on the myrie day;
And for to doon his observaunce to May —
Remembrynge on the poynt of his desir —
He on a courser, startlynge as the fir,
Is riden into the feeldes, hym to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove of which that I yow tolde
By aventure his wey he gan to holde,
To maken hym a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebynde or hawethorn leves;
And loude he song ayeyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Welcome be thou, faire, fresshe May,
In hope that I som grene gete may!'
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
Into a grove ful hastily he sterte;
And in a path he rometh up and doun,
Ther-as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bussh, that no man myghte hym se —
For soore aferd of his deeth thanne was he.

Nothyng ne knew he that it was Arcite.
God woot, he wolde have trowed it ful lite;
But sooth is seyd, go sithen many yeres,
That 'Feeld hath eyen and the wode hath eres.'
It is ful fair, a man to bere hym evene,
For 'Al day meeteth men at unset stevene.'
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe;
For in the bussh he sitteth now ful stille.
Whan that Arcite hadde romed al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fil al sodeynly,
As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres —
Now in the cropê, now doun in the breres;
Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,
Right so kan geery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk. Right as hir day
Is gereful, right so chaungeth she array —
Selde is the Friday al the wowke ylike.
Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to sike,
And sette hym doun withouten any moore.
'Allas,' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! ybroght is to confusion
The blood roial of Cadme and Amphion —
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
And of the citee first was crouned kyng.
Of his lynage am I, and his ofspryng
By verray ligne, as of the stok roial;
And now I am so caytyf and so thral
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve hym as his squier pourely.
And yet dooth Juno me wel moore shame,
For I dar noght biknowe myn owene name;
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,

Now highte I Philostrate — noght worth a myte!
Allas, thou felle Mars! allas, Juno!
Thus hath youre ire oure kynrede al fordo,
Save oonly me and wrecched Palamon,
That Theseus martireth in prison.
And over al this, to sleen me outrely,
Love hath his firy dart so brennyngly
Ystiked thurgh my trewe, careful herte
That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye!
Ye been the cause wherfore that I dye.
Of al the remenant of myn oother care
Ne sette I nat the montance of a tare,
So that I koude doon aught to youre plesaunce.
And with that word he fil doun in a traunce
A longe tyme, and after he up sterte.
This Palamon, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
For ire he quook; no lenger wolde he byde;
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
He stirte hym up out of the buskes thikke,
And seide, 'Arcitè, false traytour wikke!
Now artow hent that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo;
And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have seyd thee heer biforn;
And hast byjaped heere Duc Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus.
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye!
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
But I wol love hire oonly and namo;
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foo;
And though that I no wepene have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede noght that outher thow shalt dye,
Or thow ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wolt, for thou shalt nat asterte.'
This Arcitè, with ful despitous herte,

Whan he hym knew, and hadde his tale herd,
As fiers as leon pulled out his swerd,
And seyde thus: 'By God that sit above,
Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love,
And eek that thow no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest nevere out of this grove pace,
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurete and the bond
Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee.
What, verray fool, thynk wel that' love is fre!'
And I wol love hire mawgree al thy myght.
But forasmuche thou art a worthy knyght
And wilnest to darreyne hire by bataille,
Have heer my trouthe, tomorwe I wol nat faile,
Withoute wityng of any oother wight,
That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,
And bryngen harneys, right ynough for thee;
And chese the beste and leve the worste for me.
And mete and drynke this nyght wol I brynge,
Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddynge.
And if so be that thou my lady wynne,
And sle me in this wode, ther I am inne,
Thow mayst wel have thy lady as for me.'
This Palamon answerde, 'I graunte it thee.'
And thus they been departed til amorwe,
Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyd, that 'Love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, hir thankes, have no felaweshipe.'
Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is riden anon unto the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne;
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al the harneys hym biforn.

And in the grove, at tyme and place yset,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
To chaungen gan the colour in hir face.
Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leon and the bere,
And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thynketh, 'Heere cometh my mortal enemy.
Withoute faile, he moot be deed or I;
For outher I moot sleen hym at the gappe,
Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe' —
So ferden they, in chaungyng of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem oother knewe.
Ther nas no 'good day' ne no saluyng;
But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,
Everich of hem heelp to armen oother
As freendly as he were his owene brother.
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen ech at oother wonder longe.
Thou myghtest wene that this Palamon
In his fightyng were a wood leon;
And as a crueel tigre was Arcite.
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whit as foom, for ire wood;
Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
And in this wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle,
And forth I wole of Theseus yow telle.

The Destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world, over-al,
The purveiaunce that God hath seyn biforn —
So strong it is, that though the world had sworn
The contrarie of a thyng by ye or nay,
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day
That falleth nat eft withinne a thousand yeere.
For certeinly oure appetites heere,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love, —
Al is this reuled by the Sighte above.

A May Party

From the *Très Riches Heures* of Jehan duc de Berri, now at Chantilly. The MS was illuminated mainly by the Limbourg brothers, before 1416.

This mene I now by myghty Theseus,
That for to hunten is so desirus,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth hym no day
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horn and houndes hym bisyde.
For in his huntyng hath he swich delit
That it is al his joye and appetit
To been hymself the grete hertes bane;
For after Mars he serveth now Dyane.
Cleer was the day, as I have toold er this,
And Theseus with alle joye and blis,
With his Ypolita, the faire queene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On huntyng be they riden roially.
And to the grove that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,
Duc Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rideth hym ful right;
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth in his weye.
This duc wol han a cours at hym or tweye
With houndes, swiche as that hym list comaunde.
And whan this duc was come unto the launde,
Under the sonne he looketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously that with the leeste strook
It semed as it wolde fille an ook.
But what they weren no thyng he ne woot.
This duc his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two;
And pulled out a swerd and cride, 'Hoo!
Namoore, up peyne of lesynge of youre heed!
By myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook that I may seen.
But telleth me what mystiers men ye been
That been so hardy for to fighten heere

Withouten juge or oother officere,
As it were in a lystes roially?'
This Palamon answerde hastily
And seyde, 'Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth disserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of oure owene lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge.
But sle me first, for seinte charitee;
But sle my felawe eek, as wel as me.
Or sle hym first; for though thow knowest it lite,
This is thy mortal foo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banysshed on his heed.
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam unto thy gate,
And seyde that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yer;
And thou hast maked hym thy chief squier.
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleynly my confession
That I am thilke woful Palamon
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal foo; and it am I
That loveth so hoote Emélye the brighte
That I wol dyê present in hir sighte.
Therfore I axe deeth, and my juwise.
But sle my felawe in the same wise;
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'
This worthy duc answerde anon agayn
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusion.
Youre owene mouth, by youre confession,
Hath dampned yow, and I wol it recorde;
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shal be deed, by myghty Mars the rede!'
The Queene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe; and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladyes in the compaignye.

Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estaat,
And nothyng but for love was this debaat;
And saugh hir blody woundes, wyde and soore.
And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore,
'Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!'
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet, ther-as he stood;
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood,
For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered, shortly, in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause;
And although that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused.
And thus he thoghte wel that every man
Wol helpe hymself in love, if that he kan,
And eek delivere hymself out of prison.
And eek his herte hadde compassion
Of wommen, for they wepen evere in oon.
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon
And softe unto hymself he seyde, 'Fy
Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leon, bothe in word and dede,
To hem that been in repentance and drede,
As wel as to a proud, despitous man,
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan.
That lord hath litel of discrecion
That in swich cas kan no division,
But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon.'
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to looken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte:
'The god of love, a, *benedicite*,
How myghty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeyns his myght ther gayneth none obstacles.
He may be cleped a god for hise myracles,
For he kan maken, at his owene gyse,

Of everich herte as that hym list divyse.
Lo, heere this Arcite and this Palamon,
That quitly weren out of my prison
And myghte han lyved in Thebes roially,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lith in my myght also —
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Bróght hem hýder bothe for to dye.
Now looketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
Who may been a fole but-if he love?
Bihoold, for Goddes sake that sit above!
Se how they blede! Be they noght wel arrayed?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse.
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
That serven love, for aught that may bifalle.
But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
Kan hem therfore as muche thank as me.
She woot namoore of al this hoote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow of an hare.
But all moot ben assayed, hoot and coold;
A man moot ben a fool, or yong or oold.
I woot it by myself ful yore agon, ~ 1941
For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
And therfore, syn I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot hou soore it kan a man distreyne —
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespaas
At requeste of the Queene, that kneleth heere.
And eek of Emelye, my suster deere.
And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
That neveremo ye shal my contree dere,
Ne make werre upon me nyght ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may.
I yow foryeve this trespas every deel.'
And they him sworen his axyng, faire and weel;
And hym of lordshipe and of mercy preyde.
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:

'To speke of roial lynage and richesse,
Though that she were a queene or a princesse,
Ech of you bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is; but nathelees —
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousye —
Ye woot yourself she may nat wedden two
Atones, though ye fighten everemo.
That oon of you, al be hym looth or lief,
He moot pipen in an yvy leef —
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jalouse ne so wrothe.
And for-thy, I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destynee
As hym is shape; and herkneth in what wyse —
Lo heere your ende of that I shal devyse:
'My wyl is this, for plat conclusion,
Withouten any repplicacion —
If that you liketh, take it for the beste —
That everich of you shal goon where hym leste,
Frely, withouten raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of you shal brynge an hundred knyghtes,
Armed for lystes, up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hire by bataille.
And this bihote I yow withouten faille,
Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knyght,
That wheither of yow bothe that hath myght —
This is to seyn, that wheither he or thow
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie or out of lystes dryve,
Thanne shal I yeve Emelya to wyve
To whom that Fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
Tho lystes shal I maken in this place;
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal evene juge been and trewe.
Ye shul noon oother ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thynketh this is weel ysayd,

Seyeth youre avys, and holdeth you apayd;
This is youre ende and youre conclusion.'
Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who spryngeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who kouthe tellë, or who kouthe endite,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But doun on knees wente every maner wight,
And thonken hym with al hir herte and myght;
And namely the Thebans often sithe.
And thus with good hope and with herte blithe,
They taken hir leve, and homward gonne they ride
To Thebes, with hise olde walles wyde.

Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that gooth so bisily
To maken up the lystes roially,
That swich a noble theatre as it was,
I dar wel seyen, in this world ther nas.
The cirkuit a mylë was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute.
Round was the shape, in manere of compaas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
That whan a man was set on o degree,
He lette nat his felawe for to see.
Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit;
Westward right swich another in the opposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space.
For in the lond ther was no crafty man
That geometrie or ars metrik kan,
Ne portreitour, ne kervere of ymages,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to doon his ryte and sacrifise,
He estward hath upon the gate above,

In worshipe of Venus, goddesse of love,
Doon make an auter and an oratorie;
And on the gate westward, in memorie
Of Mars, he maked hath right swich another,
That coste largely of gold a fother;
And northward, in a touret on the wal,
Of alabastre whit and reed coral
An oratorie, riche for to see,
In worshipe of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus doon wroght in noble wyse.
But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kervyng and the portreitures,
The shape, the contenaunce, and the figures,
That weren in thise oratories thre.
First, in the temple of Venus maystow se,
Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,
The sacred teeris, and the waymentynge,
The firy strokes, and the desirynge,
That loves servauntz in this lyf enduren.
The othes that her covenantz assuren;
Plesaunce and Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse,
Beautee and Youthe, Bauderie, Richesse,
Charmes and Force, Lesynges, Flaterye,
Despense, Bisynesse and Jalousye —
That wered of yelewe goldes a gerland,
And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand;
Festes, instrumentz, caroles, daunces,
Lust and Array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I rekned have and rekne shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I kan make of mencion;
For soothly al the mount of Citheron,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellynge,
Was shewed on the wal in portreyynge,
With al the gardyn and the lustynesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire, of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of kyng Salamon,

Ne yet the grete strengthe of Ercules,
Thenchauntementz of Medéa and Circes,
Nē of Turnus the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, kaytyf in servage.
Thus may ye seen that Wysdom ne Richesse,
Beautee ne Sleightė, Strengthē, Hardynesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartie;
For as hir list, the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde, 'Allas!'
Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two,
And though I koude rekene a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus, glorious for to se,
Was naked, fletynge in the large see;
And fro the navele doun al covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas.
A citole in hir right hand hadde she;
And on hir heed, ful semely for to se,
A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellynge;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikerynge.
Biforn hire stood hir sonē, Cupido.
Upon his shuldres wynges hadde he two,
And blynd he was, as it was often seene;
A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene.
Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture that was upon the wal
Withinne the temple of myghty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace —
In thilke colde, frosty region
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansion.
First, on the wal was peynted a forest,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best;
With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde,
Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough;
And dounward from an hille, under a bente,

Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotente,
Wroght al of burned steel; of which the entree
Was long, and streit, and gastly for to see;
And therout came a rage, and suche a veze
That it made al the gate for to rese.
The northren lyght in at the dores shoon;
For wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon,
Thurgh which men myghten any light discerne.
The dore was al of adamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough; and for to make it strong,
Every pyler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne greet, of iren bright and shene.
Ther saugh I, first, the dirke ymaginyng
Of Felonye, and al the compassyng;
The crueel Ire, reed as any gleede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale Drede;
The smylere with the knyfe under the cloke;
The shepne, brennynge, with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordrynge in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bibledde;
Contek with blody knyf and sharpe manace.
Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place!
The sleere of hymself yet saugh I ther —
His herte blood hath bathed al his heer;
The nayl ydryven in the shode a-nyght;
The colde deeth, with mouth gapyng upright.
Amyddes of the temple sat Meschaunce,
With Disconfort, and Sory Contenaunce.
Yet saugh I Woodnesse, laughynge in his rage;
Armed Compleint, Out-hees, and fiers Outrage;
The careyne in the busk, with throte ycorve;
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm ystorve;
The tiraunt with the pray by force yraft;
The toun destroyed — ther was no thyng laft.
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel.

Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte —
The cartere over-ryden with his carte,
Under the wheel, ful lowe, he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
The laborer, and the bocher, and the smyth,
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his styth.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saugh I Conquest, sittynge in greet honour,
With the sharpe swerd over his heed
Hangynge by a soutil twynes threed.
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deth depeynted ther biforn,
By manasynge of Mars, right by figure.
So was it shewed in that portreiture,
As is depeynted in the sterres above
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.
Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde;
I may nat rekene hem alle, though I wolde.
The statue of Mars upon a carte stood,
Armed, and looked grym, as he were wood.
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that oother Rubeus —
This god of armes was arrayed thus.
A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet,
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet.
With soutil pencel was depeynted this storie,
In redoutynge of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Dyane the chaste,
As shortly as I kan, I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripsioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of huntyng and of shamefast chastitee.
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman to a bere;
And after was she maad the loode sterre.

Thus was it peyntẹd; I kan sey yow no ferre.
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane, yturned til a tree —
(I menè nat the goddessè Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.)
Ther saugh I Attheon, an hert ymaked
For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked.
I saugh how that hisẹ houndes have hym caught,
And freeten hym, for that they knewe hym naught.
Yet peynted was a litel forthermoor
How Atthalántẹ húnted the wildè boor,
And Meleagrẹe, and many another mo;
For which Dyane wroghte hym care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawen tó memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a moone —
Wexynge it was and sholde wanye soone;
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas;
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman trávaillynge was hire biforn;
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, 'Help, for thou mayst best of alle!'
Wel koude he peynten lifly that it wroghte;
With many a floryn he the hewes boghte.

Now been the lystes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples and the theatre every deel,
Whan it was doon hym lyked wonder weel.
But stynte I wole of Theseus a lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir retournynge,
That everich sholde an hundred knyghtes brynge,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde.

And til Atthénes, hir cóvenantz fór to holde,
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knyghtes,
Wel armed for the werre, at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man
That nevere sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knyghthod of hir hond,
As fer as god hath maked see or lond,
Nas of so fewe so noble a compaignye;
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath preyd that he myghte been of that game.
And wel was hym that therto chosen was;
For if ther fille tomorwe swich a caas,
Ye knowen wel that every lusty knyght
That loveth *paramours* and hath his myght —
Were it in Engelond or elleswhere —
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there,
To fighte for a lady, *Benedicitée*,
It were a lusty sighte for to see!
And right so ferden they with Palamon;
With hym ther wenten knyghtes many on.
Som wol ben armed in an haubergeon
And in bristplate and in a light gypon;
And somme woln have a paire plates large;
And somme woln have a Pruce sheeld, or a targe;
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax; and somme a mace of steel —
Ther is no newe gyse that it nas old.
Armed were they, as I have yow told,
Everych after his opinión.
Ther maistow seen, comynge with Palamon,
Lygurge hymself, the grete kyng of Trace.
Blak was his berd and manly was his face;
The cercles of hise eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwyxen yelow and reed;
And lik a grifphon looked he aboute,
With kempe heeris on hise browes stoute;
Hise lymes grete, hise brawnes harde and stronge,
Hise shuldres brode, hise armes rounde and longe.

And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hye upon a chaar of gold stood he,
With fouré whité bolés in the trays.
In stéde of cóte-armúre, over his harnáys —
With nayles yelewe and brighte as any gold —
He hadde a beres skyn, colblak for old.
His longe heer was kembd bihynde his bak;
As any ravenes fethere it shoon for blak.
A wrethe of gold, arm-greet, of huge wighte,
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte —
Of fyne rubyes and of dyamauntz.
Aboute his chaar ther wenten white alauntz,
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leon or the deer,
And folwed hym with mósel faste ybounde,
Colered of gold, and tourettes fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route,
Armed ful wel, with hertes stierne and stoute.
With Arcité, in stories as men fynde,
The grete Emétreús, the kyng of Inde,
Upon a steede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in clooth of gold, dyapred weel,
Cam ridynge, lyk the god of armes, Mars.
His cote-armure was of clooth of Tars,
Couched with perles white and rounde and grete;
His sadel was of brend gold newe ybete;
A mantel was upon his shulder hangýnge,
Brat-ful of rubyes, rede as fyr sparklynge.
His crispe heer lyk rynges was yronne;
And that was yelow, and glytered as the sonne.
His nose was heigh; hise eyen bright citryn;
Hise lippes rounde; his colour was sangwyn;
A fewe frakenes in his face yspreynd,
Bitwixen yelow and somdel blak ymeynd;
And as a leon he his lookyng caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste;
His berd was wel bigonne for to sprynge,
His voys was as a trompe thondrynge.
Upon his heed he wered of laurer grene

A gerland, fressh and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hand he bar for his deduyt
An egle tame, as any lilye whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with hym there,
Al armed, save hir heddes, in al hir gere,
Ful richely in alle maner thynges;
For trusteth wel that dukes, erles, kynges
Were gadered in this noble compaignye,
For love, and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this kyng ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and léopárd.
And in this wise thise lordes, alle and some,
Been on the Sonday to the citee come,
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duc, this worthy knyght,
Whan he had broght hem into his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour
That yet men weneth that no maner wit
Of noon estaat ne koude amenden it.
The mynstralcye; the service at the feeste;
The grete yiftes to the meeste and leeste;
The riche array of Theseus paleys;
Ne who sat first ne last upon the deys;
What ladyes fairest been, or best daunsynge,
Or which of hem kan dauncen best and synge;
Ne who moost felyngly speketh of love;
What haukes sitten on the perche above;
What houndes liggen in the floor adoun —
Of al this make I now no mencioun,
But al theffect, that thynketh me the beste;
Now cometh the point, and herkneth if yow leste.

The Sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,
Whan Palamon the larke herde synge —
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke — and Palamon also,
With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,

He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage
Unto the blisful Citherea benigne —
I mene Venus, honurable and digne;
And in hir houre he walketh forth a paas
Unto the lystes ther hire temple was;
And doun he kneleth with ful humble cheer
And herte soor, and seyde in this manere:
'Faireste of faire! O lady myn, Venus;
Doughter to Jove and spouse of Vulcanus;
Thow gladere of the Mount of Citheron,
For thilke love thow haddest to Adoon,
Have pitee of my bittre teeris smerte,
And taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte!
Allas! I ne have no langagè to telle
Theffectes, ne the tormentz of myn helle.
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;
I am so confus that I kan noght seye
But "Mercy, lady bright, that knowest weele
My thought and seest what harmes that I feele!"
Considere al this, and rewe upon my soore,
As wisly as I shal foreveremoore,
Emforth my myght, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,
Nē I ne axe nát tomórwe to háve victórie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie,
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun;
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse.
Fynd thow the manere hou and in what wyse.
I recche nat — but it may bettre be —
To have victorie of hem or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes;
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Youre vertu is so greet in hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worshipe everemo;
And on thyn auter, where I ride or go,

I wol doon sacrifice and fires beete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,
Thanne preye I thee, tomorwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcita wynne hire to his wyf.
This is theffect and ende of my preyere:
Yif me my love, thow blisful lady deere!'
  Whan the orison was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon,
Ful pitously, with alle circumstance,
Al telle I noght as now his observance;
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signe, wherby that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his boone,
And with glad herte he wente hym hoom ful soone.
  The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to gon,
Up roos the sonne; and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Dyane gan hye
Hir maydens, that she thider with hire ladde.
Ful redily with hem the fyr they ladde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen shal;
The hornes fulle of meeth, as was the gyse —
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifise.
  Smokynge the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle.
But hou she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general,
And yet it were a game to heeren al —
To hym that meneth wel it were no charge;
But it is good a man been at his large.
  Hir brighte heer was kempd, untressed al·
A coroune of a grene ook cerial
Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.

Two fyres on the auter gan she beete,
And dide hir thynges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes and thise bookes olde.
Whan kyndled was the fyr, with pitous cheere
Unto Dyane she spak as ye may heere:
'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene;
Queene of the regne of Pluto, derk and lowe;
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire;
As keepe me fro thy vengeance and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly!
Chastè goddesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,
A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to ben a wyf, and be with childe;
Noght wol I knowe the compaignye of man.
Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and kan,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee!
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so soore —
This grace I preyè thee, withoute moore,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so
That al hire hoote love and hir desir,
And al hir bisy torment and hir fir,
Be queynt, or turned in another place.
And if so be thou wolt do me no grace,
And if my destynee be shapen so
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
As sende me hym that moost desireth me!
Bihoold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
The bittre teeris that on my chekes falle.
Syn thou art mayde, and kepere of us alle,
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve;
And whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve.'

The fires brenne upon the auter cleere
Whil Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
But sodeynly she saugh a sighte queynte;
For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
And quyked agayn; and after that anon
That oother fyr was queynt and al agon;
And as it queynte it made a whistlynge,
As doon thise wete brondes in hir brennynge;
And at the brondes ende out ran anon
As it were blody dropes many oon.
For which so soore agast was Emelye
That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye;
For she ne wiste what it signyfied,
But oonly for the feere thus hath she cried,
And weep that it was pitee for to heere.
And therwithal Dyane gan appeere,
With bowe in honde, right as an hunteresse,
And seyde, 'Doghter, stynt thyn hevynesse.
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
And by eterne word writen and confermed,
Thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho
That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
But unto which of hem I may nat telle.
Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
The fires whiche that on myn auter brenne
Shulle thee declarë, er that thou go henne,
Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'
And with that word the arwes in the caas
Of the goddesse clateren faste and rynge;
And forth she wente, and made a vanysshynge;
For which this Emelye astoned was,
And seydè, 'What amounteth this, allas?
I putte me in thy proteccion,
Dyane, and in thy disposicion.'
And hoom she goth anon the nexte weye;
This is theffect, ther is nomoore to seye.
The nexte houre of Mars folwynge this,
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifise
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.

With pitous herte and heigh devocion,
Right thus to Mars he seyde his orison:
'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art and lord yholde;
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee lyst devyse,
Accepte of me my pitous sacrifise!
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my myght be worthy for to serve
Thy godhede that I may been oon of thyne,
Thanne preye I thee to rewe upon my pyne,
For thilke peyne, and thilke hoote fir,
In which thou whilom brendest for desir,
Whan that thow usedest the bëautee
Of faire, yonge, fresshe Venus free,
And haddest hire in armes at thy wille —
(Although thee ones on a tyme mysfille,
Whan Vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,
And foond thee liggynge by his wyf, allas!)
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel upon my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonnyngë, as thow woost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended moost
That evere was any lyves creature;
For she that dooth me al this wo endure
Ne reccheth nevere wher I synke or fleete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy heete,
I moot with strengthe wynne hire in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Thanne helpe me, lord, tomorwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whilom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
And do that I tomorwe have victorie!
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie.
Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren
Of any place, and alwey moost labouren
In thy plesance and in thy craftes stronge;
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge

And alle the armes of my compaignye;
And everemo, unto that day I dye,
Eterne fir I wol biforn thee fynde.
And eek to this avow I wol me bynde:
My beerd, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
That nevere yet ne felte offensioun
Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yeve,
And ben thy trewe servant whil I lyve.
Now, lord, have routhe upon my sorwes soore;
Yif me the victorie, I aske thee namoore!'
The preyere stynt of Arcita the stronge.
The rynges on the temple dore that honge,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste;
Of which Arcita somwhat hym agaste.
The fyres brenden upon the auter brighte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
And sweete smel the ground anon up yaf.
And Arcita anon his hand up haf,
And moore encens into the fyr he caste;
With othere rytes mo; and atte last,
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk rynge.
And with that soun he herde a murmurynge
Ful lowe and dym, and seyde thus, 'Victorie!'
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his in is fare,
As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.

And right anon swich strif ther is bigonne,
For thilke grauntyng, in the hevene above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love,
And Mars, the stierne god armypotente,
That Juppiter was bisy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of aventures olde,
Foond in his olde experience an art
That he ful soone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is seyd, elde hath greet avantage;
In elde is bothe wysdom and usage:

'Men may the olde at-renne and noght at-rede.'
Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this strif he gan remèdie fynde.
'My deere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,
'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath moore power than woot any man.
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte;
The murmure and the cherles rebellyng;
The groynynge, and the pryvee empoysonyng.
I do vengeance and pleyn correccion
Whil I dwelle in signe of the Leon.
Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles;
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter;
I slow Sampson, shakynge the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lookyng is the fader of pestilence.
Now weepe namoore; I shal doon diligence
That Palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight,
Though Mars shal helpe his knyght yet nathelees.
Bitwixe yow ther moot be somtyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o compleccion,
That causeth al day swich division.
I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille.
Weepe now namoore; I wol thy lust fulfille.'
Now wol I stynten of the goddes above —
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesse of love —
And telle yow as pleynly as I kan
The grete effect, for which that I bygan.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

Greet was the feeste in Atthenes that day;
And eek the lusty seson of that May

Made every wight to been in such plesaunce
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenten it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse
Eerly for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at nyght.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan sprynge,
Of hors and harneys noyse and claterynge
Ther was in the hostelryes al aboute.
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes upon steedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen divisynge of harneys,
So unkouth, and so riche, and wroght so weel,
Of goldsmythrye, of browdynge, and of steel;
The sheeldes brighte, testeres, and trappures,
Gold hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;
Lordes in paramentz on hir courseres;
Knyghtes of retenue; and eek squieres
Nailynge the speres, and helmes bokelynge,
Giggynge of sheeldes, with layneres lacynge —
There as nede is they weren no thyng ydel;
The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge; and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikynge to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and communes many oon,
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakeres, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;
The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
Heere thre, ther ten, holdynge hir question —
Dyvynynge of thise Thebane knyghtes two.
Somme seyden thus; somme seyde, 'It shal be so.'
Somme helden with hym with the blake berd;
Somme with the balled; somme with the thikke-herd.
Somme seyde, 'He looked grymme'; and 'He wolde fighte';
'He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.'
Thus was the halle ful of divynynge
Longe after that the sonne gan to sprynge.
The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked

With mynstralcie and noyse that was maked,
Heeld yet the chambre of this paleys riche
Til that the Thebane knyghtes, bothe yliche
Honured, were into the paleys fet.
Duc Theseus was at a wyndow set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preesseth thiderward ful soone,
Hym for to seen and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an 'Oo!'
Til al the noyse of peple was ydo.
And whan he saugh the noyse of peple al stille,
Tho shewed he the myghty dukes wille.
'The lord hath, of his heigh discrecion,
Considered that it were destruccion
To gentil blood to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise.
Wherfore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,
He wolde his firste purpos modifye.
'No man, therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, polax, ne short knyf,
Into the lystes sende, ne thider brynge;
Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bitynge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere by his syde.
Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde
But o cours with a sharpe ygrounde spere.
Foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.
And he that is at meschief shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght unto the stake
That shal ben ordeynèd on either syde.
But thider he shal by force and there abyde.
And if so be the chieftayn be take
On outher syde, or elles sleen his make,
No lenger shal the turneiynge laste.
'God spede you! gooth forth, and ley on faste!
With long swerd and with maces fighteth youre fille.
Gooth now youre wey; this is the lordes will.'
The voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cride they with murie stevene,

'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccion of blood!'
Up goon the trompes and the melodye;
And to the lystes rit the compaignye,
By ordinance, thurghout the citee large,
Hanged with clooth of gold, and nat with sarge.
Ful lik a lord, this noble duc gan ryde,
Thise two Thebans upon either side;
And after rood the queene and Emelye;
And after that another compaignye
Of oon and oother, after hir degre.
And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
And to the lystes come they bytyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ypolita the queene, and Emelye,
And othere ladys in degrees aboute.
Unto the seetes preesseth al the route;
And westward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite and eek the hondred of his parte
With baner reed is entred right anon.
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, estward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chiere and face.
In al the world to seken up and doun,
So evene, withouten variacioun,
Ther nere swiche compaignyes tweye;
For ther was noon so wys that koude seye
That any hadde of oother avauntage
Of worthynesse, ne of estaat ne age —
So evene were they chosen, for to gesse;
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cried was loude,
'Do now youre devoir, yonge knyghtes proude!'
The heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun;
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun.
Ther is namoore to seyn, but west and est

In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;
In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde;
Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;
Ther shyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke;
Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out gooth the swerdes, as the silver brighte;
The helmes they tohewen and toshrede;
Out brest the blood with stierne stremes rede;
With myghty maces the bones they tobreste;
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste;
Ther stomblen steedes stronge, and doun gooth al;
He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal;
He foyneth on his feet with his tronchon;
And he hym hurtleth with his hors adoun;
He thurgh the body is hurt and sithen ytake,
Maugree his heed, and broght unto the stake —
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
Another lad is on that oother syde.
And somtyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshen, and drynken if hem leste.
Ful ofte a day han thise Thebanes two
Togydre ymet and wroght his felawe wo;
Unhorsed hath ech oother of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,
So crueel on the hunte as is Arcite
For jelous herte upon this Palamon;
Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leon,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.
Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
For er the sonne unto the reste wente,
The stronge kyng Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flessh to byte.

And by the force of twenty is he take,
Unyolden, and ydrawe unto the stake.
And in the rescus of this Palamon
The stronge kyng Lygurge is born adoun;
And kyng Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon er he were take.
But al for noght; he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte myghte hym helpe naught;
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicion.
Who sorweth now but woful Palamon,
That moot namoorē goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus hadde seyn this sighte,
Unto the folk that foghten thus echon
He cryde, 'Hoo, namoore; for it is doon!
I wol be trewe juge and no partie.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelie,
That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne.'
Anon-ther is a noyse of peple bigonne,
For joye of this, so loude and heighe withalle
It semed that the lystes sholde falle.
What kan now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? What dooth this queene of love
But wepeth so, for wantynge of hir wille,
Til that hir teeres in the lystes fille.
She seyde, 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'
Saturnus seyde, 'Doghter hoold thy pees!
Mars hath his wille; his knyght hath al his boone;
And, by myn heed, thow shalt been esed soone.'
The trompes, with the loude mynstralcie,
The heraudes that ful loude yolle and crie,
Been in hire wele for joye of Daun Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stynteth now a lite,
Which a myracle ther bifel anon.
This fierse Arcite hath of his helm ydon,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Lokynge upward upon Emelye;

And she agayn hym caste a freendlich eye,
And was al his chiere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne;
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep aside and foundred as he leep.
And er that Arcité may taken keep,
He pighte hym on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His brest tobrosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborn out of the place,
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he korven out of his harneys,
And in a bed ybrought, ful faire and blyve,
For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alwey criynge after Emelye.
Duc Theseus with al his compaignye
Is comen hoom to Atthenes his citee
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal been heeled of his maladye.
And of another thyng they weren as fayn,
That of hem allé was ther noon yslayn,
Al were they soore yhurt, and namely oon
That with a spere was thirled his brest boon.
To othere woundes and to broken armes
Somme hadden salves, and somme hadden charmes;
Fermacies of herbés, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir lymes have.
For which this noble duc, as he wel kan,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe nyght
Unto the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitynge
But as a justes or a tourneiynge;

For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For fallyng nys nat but an aventure.
Ne to be lad by force unto the stake,
Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take —
Of persóne allóne, withouten mo —
And haryed forth by arme, foot, and too;
And eke his steede dryven forth with staves
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves —
It nas aretted hym no vileynye;
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.
For which anon Duc Theseus leet crye,
To stynten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,
And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feeste dayes three;
And convoyed the kynges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely.
And hoom wente every man the righte way;
Ther was namoore but 'Farewel!' 'Have good day!'
Of this bataille I wol namoore endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcyte.
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the soore
Encreesseth at his herte moore and moore.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth and is in his bouk ylaft,
That neither veyne blood, ne ventusynge,
Ne drynke of herbes may ben his helpynge.
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
(For thilke vertu cleped natural)
Ne may the venym voyden ne expelle.
The pipes of his longes gonne to swelle
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venym and corrupcion.
Hym gayneth neither, for to gete his lif,
Vomyt upward ne dounward laxatif.
Al is tobrosten thilke regioun;
Nature hath now no dominacioun,
And certeinly, ther Nature wol nat wirche,

'Farewel, Phisik! go ber the man to chirche!'
This al and som, that Arcita moot dye;
For which he sendeth after Emelye
And Palamon that was his cosyn deere.
Thanne seyde he thus, as ye shal after heere:
'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o point of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love moost;
But I biquethe the servyce of my goost
To yow, aboven every creature,
Syn that my lyf(ne) may no lenger dure.
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departynge of our compaignye!
Allas, myn hertes queene! allas, my wyf,
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love; now in his colde grave,
Allone, withouten any compaignye!
Farewel, my swete foo, myn Emelye!
And softe taak me in youre armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
'I have heer with my cosyn Palamon
Had strif and rancour, many a day agon,
For love of yow, and for my jalousye.
And Juppiter so wys my soule gye,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstances trewely —
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, knyghthede,
Wysdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kynrede,
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art —
So Juppiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow and wol doon al his lyf.
And if that evere ye shul ben a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.'
And with that word, his speche faille gan;

And from his herte up to his brest was come
The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome;
And yet mooreover, for in hise armes two
The vital strengthe is lost and al ago.
Oonly the intellect, withouten moore,
That dwelled in his herte, syk and soore,
Gan faillen when the herte felte deeth.
Dusked hise eyen two, and failled breeth;
But on his lady yet caste he his eye;
His laste word was 'Mercy, Emelye!'
His spirit chaunged hous and wente ther,
As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher.
Therfore I stynte; I nam no divinistre;
Of soules fynde I nat in this registre.
Ne mé ne líst thilke opínions to telle,
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
Arcite is coold, ther Mars his soule gye!
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.
Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon;
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swownynge, and baar hire fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich cás wómmen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbond is from hem ago,
That for the moore part they sorwen so,
Or ellis fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certeinly they dye.
Infinite been the sorwes and the teeres
Of olde folk, and eek of tendre yeeres,
In al the toun for deeth of this Theban;
For hym ther wepeth bothe child and man.
So greet a wepyng was ther noon certayn
Whan Ector was ybroght, al fressh yslayn,
To Troye,—Allas the pitee that was ther!
Cracchynge of chekes; rentynge eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed?' thise wommen crye,
'And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye.'
Nó man myghte gladen Theseus,

Savynge his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacion,
As he hádde séyn it úp and doun —
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse —
And shewed hem ensamples and liknesse.
'Right as ther dyed nevere man,' quod he,
'That he ne lyvede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lyvede never man,' he seyde,
'In al this world that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passynge to and fro.
Deeth is an ende of every worldes soore.'
And over al this, yet seyde he muchel moore
To this effect, ful wisely to enhorte
The peple that they sholde hem reconforte.
Duc Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Cast bisily wher that the sepulture
Of goode Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eek moost honurable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusion
That ther-as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene —
That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,
Ther-as he hadde hise amorouse desires,
His compleynte, and for love hise hoote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which the office
Fúnerál he mýghte al áccomplíce.
And leet comande anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe,
In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne.
Hise officers with swifte feet they renne
And ryden anon at his comandement.
And áfter this Theseus hath ysent
After a beere, and it al overspradde
With clooth of gold, the richeste that he hadde;
And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves white;
Eek on his heed a coroune of laurer grene;
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.

— He leyde hym, bare the visage, on the beere.
Therwith he weepe that pitee was to heere.
And for the peple sholde seen hym alle,
Whan it was day he broghte hym to the halle,
That roreth of the criyng and the soun.
Tho cam this woful Theban, Palamon,
With flotery berd and rugged asshy heeres,
In clothes blake, ydropped al with teeres;
And passynge othere of wepynge, Emelye,
The rewefulleste of al the compaignye.
Inasmuche as the servyce sholde be
The moore noble, and riche in his degree,
Duc Theseus leet forth thre steedes brynge,
That trapped were in steel al gliterynge,
And covered with the armes of Daun Arcite.
Upon thise steedes, that weren grete and white,
Ther sitten folk, of whiche oon baar his sheeld,
Another his sperë in his hondes heeld,
The thridde baar with hym his bowe Turkeys —
Of brend gold was the caas and eek the harneys;
And riden forth a paas, with sorweful cheere,
Toward the grove, as ye shul after heere.
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres caryeden the beere
With slake paas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister strete,
That sprad was al with blak; and wonder hye
Right of the samë is the strete ywrye.
Upon the right hond wente olde Egeus,
And on that oother syde Duc Theseus,
With vessel in hir hand, of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;
Eek Palamon with ful greet compaignye;
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do the office of funeral servyse.
Heigh labour and ful greet apparaillynge
Was at the service and the fyr makynge,
That with his grene tope the heven raughte,

And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte —
This is to seyn, the bowes weren so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode;
But how the fyr was maked upon highte,
And eek the names that the treës highte —
As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popeler,
Wylugh, elm, plane, assh, box, chasteyn, lynde, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltre —
How they weren feld, shal nat be toold for me;
Ne hou the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hire habitacioun,
In whiche they woneden in reste and pees —
Nymphes, fawnes, and amadriades —
Ne hou the beestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And thanne with drye stokkes, cloven a thre,
And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,
And thanne with clooth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hangynge, with ful many a flour;
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this;
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made fyr;
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desire;
Ne what jeweles men in the fyre tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, and somme hir spere,
And of hire vestimentz whiche that they were,
And coppes full of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route,
Thries riden al the place aboute,
Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,
And thries with hir speres claterynge;

And thries how the ladyes gonne crye;
And how that lad was homward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that lychë-wakë was yholde
Al thilke nyght; ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake pleyes. — Ne kepe I nat to seye —
Who wrastleth best, naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that baar hym best in no disjoynt.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Atthenes, whan the pley is doon.
But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.
By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres,
Al styntyd is the moornynge and the teres
Of Grekes. By oon general assent,
Thanne semed me, ther was a parlement
At Atthenes upon certein poyntz and caas;
Among the whiche poyntz yspoken was,
To have with certein contrees alliance,
And have fully of Thebans obeissance.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of hym what was the cause and why.
But in hise blake clothes, sorwefully,
He cam, at his comandement, in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space,
Er any word cam fram his wise brest,
Hise eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he siked stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille:
'The Firste Moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was theffect, and heigh was his entente.
Wel wiste he why and what therof he mente;
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee.

That same Prince and that same Moevere,' quod he,
'Hath stablissed in this wrecched world adoun
Certeyne dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendrid in this place;
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge.
Ther nedeth noght noon auctoritee allegge;
For it is preeved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Thanne may men by this ordre wel discerne
That thilke Moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every part dirryveth from his hool;
For nature hath taken his bigynnyng,
Of no partie or cantel of a thyng,
But of a thyng that parfit is and stable,
Descendynge so til it be corrumpable.
And therfore, of his wise purveiaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce
That speces of thynges and progressions
Shullen enduren by successions,
And nat eterne, withouten any lye.
This maystow understonde, and seen at eye.
  Loo the ook that hath so long a norisshynge
From tyme that it first bigynneth sprynge,
And hath so long a lif, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
  Considereth eek how that the harde stoon
Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
  The brode ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;
The grete toures se we wane and wende.
Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.
  Of man and womman seen we wel also
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two —
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age —
He moot be deed, the kyng as shal a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se.

Ther helpeth noght; al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thyng moot deye.
'What maketh this but Juppiter the kyng,
That is prince, and cause of alle thyng,
Convertynge al unto his propre welle,
From which it is dirryved, sooth to telle.
And here agayns no creature on lyve,
Of no degree, availleth for to stryve.
'Thanne is it wysdom, as it thynketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it weel that we may nat eschue,
And námelỳ that tó us alle is due.
And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to hym that al may gye.
And certeinly a man hath moost honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name;
Thanne hath he doon his freend ne hym no shame.
And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,
Whan with honour up yolden is his breeth
Than whan his name apalled is for age,
For al forgeten is his vassellage.
Thanne is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevynesse
That goode Arcite, of chivalrië flour,
Departed is, with duetee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
Why grucchen heere his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welfare, that loved hem so weel?
Kan he hem thank? Nay, God woot, never a deel —
That bothe his soule, and eek hemself offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.
'What may I conclude of this longē sérye,
But after wo I rede us to be merye
And thanken Juppiter of al his grace?
And er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of sorwes two

O parfit joye, lastynge everemo.
And looketh now, wher moost sorwe is herinne,
Ther wol we first amenden and bigynne.
'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent,
With all thavys heere of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, thyn owene knyght,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and myght,
And evere hath doon, syn that ye first hym knewe,
That ye shul of your grace upon hym rewe,
And taken hym for housbonde and for lord.
Lene me youre hond, for this is oure accord;
Lat se now of youre wommanly pitee.
He is a kynges brother sone, pardee;
And though he were a poure bacheler,
Syn he hath served yow so many a yeer,
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It moste been considered, leeveth me;
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'
Thanne seyde he thus to Palamon ful right:
'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermonyng
To make yow assente to this thyng.
Com neer, and taak youre lady by the hond.'
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond
That highte matrimoigne, or mariage,
By al the conseil and the baronage
And thus, with alle blisse and melodye,
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelye.
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
Sende hym his love that it deere aboght;
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Lyvynge in blisse, in richesse, and in heele;
And Emelye hym loveth so tendrely,
And he hire serveth al so gentilly
That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene
Of jalousie or any oother tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
And God save al this faire compaignye!

Amen

Heere is ended the Knyghtes tale.

Heere folwen the words bitwene the Hoost and the Millere.

Whan that the Knyght had thus his tale ytoold,
In al the route ne was ther yong ne oold
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
And worthy for to drawen to memorie,
And namely the gentils everichon.
Oure Hooste lough and swoor, 'So moot I gon,
This gooth aright; unbokeled is the male.
Lat se now who shal telle another tale;
For trewely the game is wel bigonne.
Now telleth on, sire Monk, if that ye konne,
Sumwhat to quite with the Knyghtes tale.'
The Millere, that for-dronken was al pale
So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curteisie;
But in Pilates voys he gan to crie,
And swoor 'By armes and by blood and bones,
I kan a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale.'
Oure Hooste saugh that he was dronke of ale,
And seyde, 'Abyd, Robyn, my leeve brother;
Som bettre man shal telle us first another.
Abyde, and lat us werken thriftily.'
'By Goddes soule,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;
For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'
Oure Hoost answerde, 'Tel on, a devele wey!
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome.'
'Now herkneth,' quod the Millere, 'alle and some!
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke — I knowe it by my soun —
And therfore if that I misspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you preye;
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.'
The Reve answerde and seyde, 'Stynt thy clappe!

Lat be thy lewed, dronken harlotrye!
It is a synne and eek a greet folye
To apeyren any man or hym defame,
And eek to bryngen wyves in swich fame.
Thou mayst ynogh of othere thynges seyn.'
This dronke Millere spak ful soone ageyn
And seyde, 'Leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I say nat therfore that thou art oon.
Ther been ful goode wyves many oon;
And evere a thousand goode ayeyns oon badde,
That knowestow wel thyself but-if thou madde.
Why artow angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf, pardee, as wel as thow;
Yet nolde I for the oxen in my plogh
Take upon me moore than ynogh
As demen of myself that I were oon.
I wol bileve wel that I am noon.
An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf
Of goddes pryvetee nor of his wyf.'
. . . . . .
What sholde I moore seyn but this Millere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere.
Mathynketh that I shal reherce it heere;
And therfore every gentil wight I preye,
For Goddes love demeth nat that I seye
Of yvel entente, but that I moot reherce
Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my mateere.
And therfore whoso list it nat yheere
Turne over the leef and chese another tale;
For he shal fynde ynowe grete and smale
Of storial thyng that toucheth gentillesse,
And eek moralitee and hoolynesse.
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys;
The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
So was the Reve and othere manye mo;
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.

Avyseth yow; putteth me out of blame.
And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game.

[For remarks on the Miller's Tale and the reasons for its omission from the selections see the Notes. The tale is brilliantly written, as the following specimens will show.]

Heere bigynneth the Millere his tale.

Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord;
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With hym ther was dwellynge a poure scoler
Hadde lerned art, but al his fantasye
Was turned for to lerne astrologye;
And koude a certeyn of conclusions,
To demen by interrogacions,
If that men asked hym in certein houres,
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures,
Of if men asked hym what sholde bifalle
Of every thyng; I may nat rekene hem alle.
This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas.
Of deerne love he koude, and of solas;
And therto he was sleigh, and ful privee,
And lyk a mayden, meke for to see.
A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye,
Allone, withouten any compaignye,
Ful fetisly ydight with herbes swoote;
And he hymself as sweete as is the roote
Of lycorys or any cetewale.
His Almageste, and bookes grete and smale,
His astrelabie longynge for his art,
His augrym stones layen faire apart
On shelves, couched at his beddes heed;
His presse ycovered with a faldyng reed.
And all above ther lay a gay sautrie,
On which he made a-nyghtes melodie
So swetely that al the chambre rong;
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song;
And after that he song *The Kynges Noote.*

Ful often blessed was his myrie throte.
And thus this sweete clerk his tyme spente,
After his freendes fyndyng and his rente.
This Carpenter hadde wedded newe a wyf,
Which that he lovede moore than his lyf.
Of eighteteene yeer she was of age.
Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage,
For she was yong and wylde, and he was old,
And demed hymself been lik a cokewold.
He knew nat Catoun — for his wit was rude —
That bad man sholde wedde his simylitude.
Men sholde wedden after hire estaat,
For youthe and elde is often at debaat.
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
He moste endure, as oother folk, his care.
Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal
As any wezele hir body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede, ybarred al of silk;
A barmclooth as whit as morne milk
Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore.
Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore
And eek bihynde on hir coler aboute
Of colblak silk, withinne and eek withoute.
The tapes of hir white voluper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filet brood of silk and set ful hye.
And sikerly she hadde a likerous eye;
Ful smale ypulled were hire browes two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
She was ful moore blisful on to see
Than is the newe perejonette tree,
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,
Tasseled with grene and perled with latoun.
In al this world, to seken up and doun,
There was no man so wys that koude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
Ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe
Than in the tour the noble yforged newe.

But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittynge on a berne.
Therto she koude skippe, and make game,
As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.
Hir mouth was sweete as bragot, or the meeth,
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt;
Long as a mast, and uprighte as a bolt.
A brooch sche baar upon hir lowe coler
As brood as is the boos of a bokeler;
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.
She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.

. . . . . .

Thanne fil it thus that to the paryssh chirche,
Cristes owene werkes for to wirche,
This goode wyf went on an haliday.
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.
Now was ther of that chirche a parissh clerk
The which that was ycleped Absolon.
Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
Ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.
His rode was reed; hise eyen greye as goos.
With Powles wyndow corven on his shoos,
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
Yclad he was, ful smal and proprely,
Al in a kirtel of a lyght waget;
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set;
And ther-upon he hadde a gay surplys,
As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.
A myrie child he was, so God me save!
Wel koude he laten blood and clippe and shave,
And maken a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.
In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce,
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro;

And pleyen songes on a small rubible.
Therto he song somtyme a loud quynyble,
And as wel koude he pleye on his giterne.
In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas,
Ther any gaylard tappestere was.

. . . . . .

This Absolon, that jolif was and gay,
Gooth with a sencer on the haliday,
Sensynge the wyves of the parisshe faste,
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
And namely on this carpentéris wyf.
To loke on hire hym thoughte a myrie lyf;
She was so propre, and sweete, and likerous,
I dar wel seyn if she hadde been a mous
And he a cat, he wold hire hente anon.

. . . . . .

The prologe of the Reves Tale.

Whan folk hadde laughen at this nyce cas
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they seyde,
But for the moore part they loughe and pleyde.
Ne at this tale I saugh no man hym greve
But it were oonly Osewold the Reve.
Bycause he was of carpenteris craft,
A litel ire is in his herte ylaft;
He gan to grucche, and blamed it a lite.
'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel koude I yow quite
With bleryng of a proud milleres eye,
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
But ik am oold; me list no pley for age.
Gras tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage;
This white top writeth myne olde yeris;
Myn herte is mowled also as myne heris.

. . . . . .

Foure gleedes han we, whiche I shal devyse —
Avauntyng, liyng, anger, coveitise.

Thise foure sparkles longen unto eelde;
Oure olde lemes mowe wel been unweelde,
But wyl ne shal nat faillen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lif bigan to renne.
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;
And ever sithe hath so the tappe yronne
Til that almoost al empty is the tonne.
The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe.
The sely tongė may wel rynge and chymbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yoore;
With olde folk, save dotage, is namoore.'
Whan that oure Hoost hadde herd this sermonyng,
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng.
He seide, 'What amounteth al this wit?
What shul we speke alday of hooly writ?
The devel made a reve for to preche,
And of a soutere shipman or a leche.
Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme.
Lo Depeford, and it is half wey pryme;
Lo Grenewych, ther many a shrewe is inne.
It were al tyme thy tale to bigynne.'
'Now sires,' quod this Osewold the Reve,
'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve
Thogh I answere and somdeel sette his howve;
For leveful is with force force of-showve.
'This dronke Millere hath ytoold us heer
How that bigyled was a carpenteer —
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon.
And by youre leve, I shal him quite anoon;
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
I pray to God his nekke mote breke!
He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke,
But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke.'

Heere bigynneth the Reves Tale.

At Trumpyngton, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther gooth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiche brook ther stant a melle;
And this is verray sooth that I yow telle:
A millere was ther dwellynge many a day.
As eny pecok he was proud and gay;
Pipen he koude, and fisshe, and nettes beete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and sheete.
And by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.
A joly poppere baar he in his pouche —
Ther was no man, for peril, dorste hym touche —
A Sheffeld thwitel baar he in his hose.
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose;
As piled as an ape was his skulle.
He was a market betere atte fulle.
Ther dorste no wight hand upon hym legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
A theef he was of corn and eek of mele,
And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele.
His name was hoote deynous Symkyn.
A wyf he hadde ycomen of noble kyn —
The person of the toun hir fader was.
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras
For that Symkyn sholde in his blood allye.
She was yfostred in a nonnerye;
For Symkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But-if she were wel ynorissed and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
And she was proud and peert as is a pye.
A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two
On haly dayes; biforn hire wolde he go,
With his typet bounde about his heed,
And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.
Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but 'Dame';
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye

That with hire dorste rage or ones pleye
But-if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
With panade, or with knyf, or boidekyn;
For jalous folk ben perilous everemo —
Algate, they wolde hire wyves wenden so.
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich —
As ful of hoker and of bismare.
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hire spare,
What for hire kynrede, and hir nortelrie
That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie.
A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two,
Of twenty yeer, withouten any mo,
Savynge a child that was of half yeer age —
In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
This wenche thikke and wel ygrowen was,
With kamuse nose, and eyen greye as glas,
Buttokes brode, and brestes rounde and hye;
But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.
This person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hire his heir,
Bothe of his catel and of his mesuage;
And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
Into som worthy blood of auncetrye;
For hooly chirches good moot been despended
On hooly chirches blood that is descended;
Therfore he wolde his hooly blood honoure,
Though that he hooly chirche sholde devoure.
Gret sokene hath this millere, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantebregge;
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt ygrounde.
And on a day it happed in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye —
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye —
For which this millere stal bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme moore than biforn;

For ther biforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a theef outrageously;
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare,
But therof sette the millere nat a tare;
He craketh boost and swoor it was nat so.
Thanne were ther yonge poure clerkes two
That dwelten in this halle of which I seye.
Testif they were and lusty for to pleye;
And oonly for hire myrthe and revelrye
Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yeve hem leve, but a litel stounde,
To goon to mille and seen hir corn ygrounde;
And hardily they dorste leye hir nekke
The millere shold nat stele hem half a pekke
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
John highte that oon, and Aleyn heet that oother;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I kan nat telle where.
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk and also John,
With good swerd and bokeler by hir side.
John knew the wey — hem nededе no gyde —
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
Aleyn spak first: 'Al hayl, Symond, yfayth!
Hou fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf?'
'Aleyn, welcome,' quod Symkyn, 'by my lyf!
And John also! how now? what do ye heer?'
'Symond,' quod John, 'by God, nede has na peer;
Hym boës serve hymselne that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Oure manciple, I hope, he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed;
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,
To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn.
I pray yow spede us heythen, that ye may.'
'It shal be doon,' quod Symkyn, 'by my fay.
What wol ye doon whil that it is in hande?'

'By God, right by the hopur wil I stande,'
Quod John, 'and se how that the corn gas in.
Yet saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,
How that the hopur wagges til and fra.'
Aleyn answerde: 'John, and wiltow swa?
Thanne wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
And se how that the mele falles doun
Into the trough; that sal be my disport —
For, John, yfaith, I may been of youre sort;
I is as ille a millere as are ye.'
This millere smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoghte, 'Al this nys doon but for a wyle;
They wene that no man may hem bigile.
But by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir eye,
For al the sleighte in hir philosophye!
The moore queynte crekes that they make,
The moore wol I stele, whan I take.
Instide of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren:
"The gretteste clerkes been noght wisest men,"
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare.
Of al hir art ne counte I noght a tare.'
Out at the dore he gooth ful pryvely.
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softely.
He looketh up and doun til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther-as it stood ybounde,
Bihynde the millë under a lefsel,
And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel;
He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
And whan the hors was laus, he gynneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
Forth with 'wehee!' thurgh thikkë and thurgh thenne.
This millere gooth agayn; no word he seyde,
But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and weel ygrounde.
And whan the mele is sakked and ybounde,
This John goth out and fynt his hors away;
And gan to crie, 'harrow!' and 'weylaway!'
'Oure hors is lorn! Alayn, for Goddes banes,
Stepe on thy feet! Com out, man, al atanes

Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn!'
This Aleyn al forgat bothe mele and corn;
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrie.
'What! whilk way is he geen?' he gan to crie.
The wyf cam lepynge inward with a ren;
She seyde, 'Allas! youre hors goth to the fen
With wilde mares as faste as he may go.
Unthank come on his hand that boond hym so,
And he that bettre sholde han knyt the reyne!'
'Allas,' quod John, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn alswa.
I is ful wight, God waat, as is a raa.
By Goddes herte! he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
Ilhayl! by God, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!'
This sely clerkes han ful faste yronne
Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John.
And whan the millere saugh that they were gon,
He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were aferd.
Yet kan a millere make a clerkes berd
For al his Art. Now lat hem goon hir weye.
Lo, wher they goon! Ye, lat the children pleye;
They gete hym nat so lightly, by my croun!'
Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With 'Keepe! keepe! stand! stand! Jossa, warderere!
Ga whistle, thou; and I shal kepe hym heere.'
But shortly, til that it was verray nyght,
They koude nat, though they do al hir myght,
Hir capul cacche — he ran alwey so faste —
Til in a dych they caughte hym atte laste.
. . . . . .

[The brilliantly written but vulgar tale of the Reeve is omitted from these selections. See the Notes.]

The prologe of the Cokes Tale.

The Cook of London, whil that the Reve spak,
For joye him thoughte he clawed him on the bak.
'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes passion!
This millere hadde a sharpe conclusion
Upon his argument of herbergage.
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage
"Ne brynge nat every man into thyn hous,"
For herberwynge by nyghte is perilous.
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
Whom that he broghte into his pryvetee.
I pray to God, so yeve me sorwe and care,
If evere, sitthe I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herde I a millere bettre yset a werk;
He hadde a jape of malice in the derk.
But God forbede that we stynte heere;
And therfore if ye vouche sauf to heere
A tale of me, that am a poure man,
I wol yow telle, as wel as evere I kan,
A litel jape that fil in oure citee.'
Oure Hoost answerde and seide, 'I graunte it thee.
Now telle on, Roger; looke that it be good;
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a Jakke of Dovere hastow soold,
That hath been twies hoot and twies coold;
Of many a pilgrym hastow Cristes curs,
For of thy percely yet they fare the wors,
That they han eten with thy stubbel goos;
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name!
But yet, I pray thee, be nat wroth for game;
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.'
'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fey,
But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the Flemyng seith.
And therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer.
But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit;

But er we parte, ywis thou shalt be quit.'
And therwithal, he lough, and made cheere,
And seyde his tale, as ye shul after heere.

Heere bigynneth the Cookes Tale.

A prentys whilom dwelled in oure citee,
And of a craft of vitailliers was hee.
Gaillard he was as goldfynch in the shawe;
Broun as a berye, a propre, short felawe,
With lokkes blake, ykempd ful fetisly.
Dauncen he koude so wel and jolily
That he was cleped Perkyn Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony sweete;
Wel was the wenche with hym myghte meete.
At every bridale wolde he synge and hoppe;
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe;
For whan ther any ridyng was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.
Til that he hadde al the sighte yseyn
And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ayeyn.
And gadered hym a meynee of his sort,
To hoppe and synge, and maken swich disport.
And ther they setten stevene for to meete,
To pleyen at the dys, in swich a streete;
For in the toun ne was ther no prentys
That fairer koude caste a paire of dys
Than Perkyn koude, and therto he was free
Of his dispense, in place of pryvetee.
That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;
For often tyme he foond his box ful bare.
For sikerly a prentys revelour,
That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,
His maister shal it in his shoppe abye,
Al have he no part of the mynstralcye.
For thefte and riot, they been convertible,
Al konne he pleye on gyterne or ribible;
Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degree,

They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.
This joly prentys with his maister bood
Til he were ny out of his prentishood,
Al were he synbbed bothe erly and late,
And somtyme lad with revel to Newegate.
But atte laste his maister hym bithoghte —
Upon a day, whan he his papir soghte —
Of a proverbe that seith this same word:
'Wel bet is roten appul out of hoord
Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
It is wel lasse harm to lete hym pace
Than he shende alle the servantz in the place.
Therfore his maister yaf hym acquitance,
And bad hym go, with sorwe, and with meschance!
And thus this joly prentys hadde his leve.
Now lat hym riote al the nyght or leve!
And — for ther is no theef withoute a lowke,
That helpeth hym to wasten and to sowke
Of that he brybe kan, or borwe may —
Anon he sente his bed and his array
Unto a compier of his owene sort
That lovede dys, and revel, and disport.

. . . . . .

[Chaucer seems to have left this tale unfinished.]

[FRAGMENT II (GROUP B¹)

MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK]

The wordes of the Hoost to the compaignye.

Oure Hoostê saugh wel that the brighte sonne
The ark of his artificial day hath ronne
The ferthe part and half an houre and moore;
And though he were nat depe ystert in loore,
He wiste it was the eightetenthe day
Of Aprill, that is messager to May;
And saugh wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it;
And therfore by the shadwe he took his wit
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clokke he gan conclude.
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute —
'Lordynges,' quod he, 'I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is gon.
Now for the love of God and of Seint John,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may.
Lordynges, the tyme wasteth nyght and day,
And steleth from us, what prývély slepýnge,
And what thurgh necligence in oure wakynge,
As dooth the streem that turneth nevere agayn,
Descendynge fro the montaigne into playn.
'Wel kan Senec and many a philosophre
Biwaillen tyme moore than gold in cofre;
For "Losse of catel may recovered be
But losse of tyme shendeth us," quod he.
It wol nat come agayn; with-outen drede,
Namoore than wole Malkynes maydenhede

Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse.
Lat us nat mowlen thus in ydelnesse.
'Sire Man of Lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye blis,
Telle us a tale anon, as forward is.
Ye been submytted thurgh youre free assent
To stónden in this cas at my júggemént;
Acquiteth yow now of youre biheeste,
Thanne have ye do youre devoir atte leeste.'
'Hooste,' quod he, '*depárdieux*, ich assente;
To breke forward is nat myn entente.
"Biheste is dette," and I wole holde fayn
Al my biheste; I kan no bettre sayn.
For swich lawe as a man yéveth another wight,
He sholde hymselven usen it, by right.
Thus wole oure text, but nathelees certeyn
I kan right now no thrifty tale seyn
That Chaucer, thogh he kan but lewedly
On metres and on rymyng craftily,
Hath seyd hem in swich Englissh as he kan
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.
And if he have noght seyd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath seyd hem in another;
For he hath toold of loveris up and doun
Mo than Ovide made of mencioun
In hise Episteles, that been ful olde.
What sholde I tellen hem, syn they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcione;
And sitthen hath he spoken of everichone
Thise noble wyves and thise loveris eke.
Whoso that wole his large volume seke
Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupide,
Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde
Of Lucresse and of Babilan Tesbee;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The pleinte of Diane and of Hermyon,
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee —
The bareyne yle stondynge in the see;
The dreynte Léandré for his Erro;

The teeris of Eleynë; and the wo
Of Brixseyde and of the, Ladómyá;
The crueltee of the, queene Médeá —
Thy litel children hangynge by the hals —
For thy Jason, that was in love so fals.
O Ypermystra, Penolopee, Alceste,
Youre wifhede he comendeth with the beste.
But certeinly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
That loved hir owene brother synfully —
Of swiche cursed stories I sey fy! —
Or ellis of Tyro Appollonius,
How that the cursed kyng Antiochus
Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede —
That is so hórrible a tálë for to rede,
Whan he hir threw upon the pavement.
And therfore he, of ful avysement,
Nolde nevere write in none of his sermons
Of swiche unkynde abhomynacions.
Nē I wol noon reherce, if that I may.
But of my tale how shall I doon this day?
Me were looth be likned, doutelees,
To Muses that men clepe Pierides —
Méthamorphósiós woot what I mene —
But nathelees I recche noght a bene
Though I come after hym with hawebake.
I speke in prose; and lat him rymes make.
And with that word he with a sobre cheere
Bigan his tale as ye shal after heere.

The prologe of the Mannes Tale of Lawe

O hateful harm! condicion of poverte!
With thurst, with coold, with hunger so confoundid,
To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
If thou noon aske, so soore artow ywoundid
That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid.
Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
Or stele or begge or borwe thy despence.

Thow blamest Crist and seist ful bitterly
He mysdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebore thou wytest synfully,
And seist thou hast to lite and he hath al.
'*Parfay!*' seistow, 'somtyme he rekene shal,
Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the gleede,
For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir neede!'

Herke what is the sentence of the wise:
'Bet is to dyen than have indigence;
Thy selve neighebor wol thee despise.
If thou be poure, farwel thy reverence.'
Yet of the wise man take this sentence:
'Alle dayes of poure men been wikke.'
Be war therfore er thou come to that prikke.

'If thou be poure, thy brother hateth thee,
And alle thy freendes fleen from thee, allas!'
O riche marchauntz, ful of wele been yee!
O noble, o prudent folk! as in this cas,
Youre bagges been nat fild with *ambes as*,
But with *sys cynk*, that renneth for youre chaunce;
At Cristemasse myrie may ye daunce.

Ye seken lond and see for yowre wynnynges;
As wise folk ye knowen all thestaat
Of regnes; ye been fadres of tidynges
And tales, bothe of pees and of debaat. —
I were right now of tales desolaat,
Nere that a marchant, goon is many a yeere,
Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal heere.

Heere begynneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.

In Surrye whilom dwelte a compaignye
Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe,
That wyde-where senten hir spicerye —
Clothes of gold, and satyns riche of hewe.
Hir chaffare was so thrifty and so newe
That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
With hem and eek to sellen hem hire ware.

Now fil it that the maistres of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport;
Noon oother message wolde they thider sende,
But comen hemself to Romé, this is the ende.
And in swich place as thoughte hem avantage
For hire entente they take hir herbergage.

Sojourned han thise marchantz in that toun
A certein tyme, as fil to hire plesance.
And so bifel that thexcellent renoun
Of the emperoures doghter, Dame Custance,
Reported was with every circumstance
Unto thise Surryen marchantz in swich a wyse,
Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune voys of every man:
'Oure emperour of Rome — God hym see! —
A doghter hath, that syn the world bigan,
To rekene as wel hir goodnesse as beautee,
Nas nevere swich another as is shee.
I prey to God, in honour hire susteene;
And wolde she were of all Europe the queene!

'In hire is heigh beautee, withoute pride;
Yowthe, withoute grenehede or folye;
To alle hire werkes vertu is hir gyde;
Humblesse hath slayn in hire al tirannye;
She is mirour of alle curteisye;
Hir herte is verray chambre of hoolynesse;
Hir hand, ministre of fredam for almesse!'

And al this voys was sooth, as God is trewe.
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn.
Thise marchantz han doon fraught hir shippes newe;
And whan they han this blisful mayden sayn,
Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
And doon hir nedes as they han doon yoore,
And lyven in wele; I kan sey yow namoore.

Now fil it that thise marchantz stode in grace
Of hym that was the sowdan of Surrye;
For whan they cam from any strange place,
He wolde of his benigne curteisye
Make hem good chiere and bisily espye
Tidynges of sondry regnes, for to leere
The wondres that they myghte seen or heere.

Amonges othere thynges specially,
Thise marchantz han hym toold of Dame Custance
So greet noblesse, in ernest, ceriously,
That this sowdan hath caught so greet plesance
To han hir figure in his remembrance
That all his lust and al his bisy cure
Was for to love hire while his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book
Which that men clipe the hevene ywriten was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love sholde han his deeth, allas!
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, God woot, whoso koude it rede,
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres many a wynter ther biforn
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles,
Of Pompei, Julius, er they were born;
The strif of Thebes; and of Ercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates,
The deeth; but mennes wittes ben so dulle
That no wight kan wel rede it atte fulle.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente;
And shortly of this matiere for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entente,
And seyde hem certein but he myghte have grace
To han Custance withinne a litel space,
He nas but deed; and charged hem in hye
To shapen for his lyf som remedye.

Diverse men diverse thynges seyden;
They argumenten, casten up and doun;
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden;
They speken of magyk and abusion;
But finally, as in conclusion,
They kan nat seen in that noon avantage,
Ne in noon oother wey save mariage.

Thanne sawe they therinne swich difficultee
By wey of reson — for to speke al playn,
Bycause that ther was swich diversitee
Bitwene hir bothe lawes — that they sayn
They 'trowe that no Cristene prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes sweete,
That us were taught by Mahoun, oure prophete.'

And he answerde: 'Rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristned, doutelees.
I moot been hires; I may noon oother chese.
I prey yow hoold youre argumentz in pees.
Saveth my lyf, and beth noght recchelees
To geten hire that hath my lyf in cure;
For in this wo I may nat longe endure.'

What nedeth gretter dilatacion?
I seye, by tretys and embassadrie,
And by the popes mediacion,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrie,
That in destruccion of maumettrie,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe deere,
They been acorded so as ye shal heere:

How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle hise liges sholde ycristned be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee;
And heer-to founden sufficient suretee.
This same accord was sworn on eyther syde.
Now, faire Custance, almyghty God thee gyde!

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I sholde tellen al the purveiance
That themperour, of his grete noblesse,
Hath shapen for his doghter, Dame Custance.
Wel may men knowen that so greet ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bisshopes been shapen with hire for to wende,
Lordes, ladies, knyghtes of renoun,
And oother folk ynogh — this is thende —
And notified is thurghout the toun
That every wight with greet devocioun
Sholde preyen Crist that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departynge;
I seye the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger tariynge,
But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some.
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist and dresseth hire to wende;
For wel she seeth ther is noon oother ende.

Allas! what wonder is it thogh she wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacion
Fro freendes that so tendrely hire kepte;
And to be bounden under subjeccion
Of oon she knoweth nat his condicion?
Housbondes been alle goode, and han ben yoore —
That knowen wyves; I dar say yow na moore.

'Fader,' she seyde, 'thy wrecched child, Custance —
Thy yonge doghter fostred up so softe —
And ye, my mooder, my soverayn plesance
Over alle thyng, out-taken Crist on lofte —
Custance, youre child, hire recomandeth ofte
Unto your grace, for I shal to Surrye;
Ne shal I nevere seen yow moore with eye.

'Allas, un-to the Barbre nacion
I moste goon, syn that it is youre wille!
But Crist, that starf for our savacion,
So yeve me grace hise heestes to fulfille!
I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille!
Wommen are born to thraldom and penance
And to been under mannes governance.'

I trowe at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal
Or Ilion brende, at Thebes the citee,
Nat Rome for the harm thurgh Hanybal,
That Romayns hath venquysshed tymes thre,
Nas herd swich tendre wepyng for pitee
As in the chambre was for hire departynge;
But forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or synge.

O firste moevyng! crueel firmament,
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al from est til occident,
That naturelly wolde holde another way!
Thy crowdyng set the hevene in swich array
At the bigynnyng of this fiers viage
That crueel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helplees falle, allas,
Out of his angle into the derkeste hous!
O Mars! O atazir, as in this cas!
O fieble Moone, unhappy been thy paas;
Thou knyttest thee ther thou art nat receyved;
Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved.

Imprudent emperour of Rome! allas,
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun?
Is no tyme bet than oothér in swich cas?
Of viage is ther noon eleccion,
Namely to folk of heigh condicion? —
Noght whan a roote is of a burthe yknowe?
Allas, we been to lewed or to slowe!

To ship is come this woful faire mayde,
Solempnely, with every circumstance.
'Now Jhesu Crist be with yow alle!' she sayde.
Ther nys namoore but 'farewel, faire Custance!'
She peyneth hire to make good contenance;
And forth I lete hire saille in this manere,
And turne I wole agayn to my matere.

The mooder of the sowdan — welle of vices! —
Espied hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete hise olde sacrifices;
And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they been come to knowe what she mente.
And whan assembled was this folk in feere,
She sette hire doun and seyde as ye shal heere:

'Lordes,' she seyde, 'ye knowen everichon
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The hooly lawes of oure Alkaron,
Yeven by Goddes message, Makomete.
But oon avow to grete God I heete —
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

'What sholde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance,
And afterward in helle to be drawe,
For we reneyed Mahoun, oure creance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance
As I shal seyn, assentynge to my loore,
And I shal make us sauf for everemoore.'

They sworen and assenten every man
To lyve with hire and dye, and by hire stonde;
And everich, in the beste wise he kan,
To strengthen hire, shal alle hise frendes fonde.
And she hath this emprise ytake on honde
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse;
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse:

'We shul first feyne us cristendom to take —
Coold water shal nat greve us but a lite! —
And I shal swiche a feeste and revel make
That, as I trowe, I shal the Sowdan quite;
For thogh his wyf be cristned never so white,
She shal have nede to wasshe awey the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hire lede.'

O Sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee!
Virago! thou Semýramę the secounde!
O serpent under femynynytee,
Lik to the serpent depe in helle ybounde!
O feyned womman! al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malice,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice.

O Sathan, envious syn thilke day
That thou were chaced from oure heritage!
Wel knowēstow to wommen the olde way;
Thou madest Eva brynge us in servage;
Thou wolt fordoon this Cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so — weylawey the while! —
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt bigile.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warye,
Leet prively hire conseil goon hire way. —
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarye?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day,
And seyde hym that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,
Repentynge hire she hethen was so longe;

Bisechynge hym to doon hire that honour
That she moste han the Cristen folk to feeste —
'To plesen hem I wol do my labour.'
The sowdan seith, 'I wol doon at youre heeste,'
And knelynge thanketh hire of that requeste;
So glad he was he nyste what to seye.
She kiste hir sone, and hoome she gooth hir weye.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

Arryved been this cristen folk to londe
In Surrye, with a greet solempne route;
And hastifliche this sowdan sente his sonde
First to his mooder, and all the regne aboute,
And seyde his wyf was comen, oute of doute,
And preyde hire for to ryde agayn the queene,
The honour of his regne to susteene.

Greet was the prees, and riche was tharray,
Of Surryens and Romayns met yfeere.
The mooder of the sowdan, riche and gay,
Recyveth hire with al so glad a cheere
As any mooder myghte hir doghter deere;
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde,
A softe paas, solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a boost,
Was roialler or moore curius
Than was thassemblee of this blisful hoost;
But this scorpioun, this wikked goost,
The sowdanesse, for all hire flaterynge,
Caste under this ful mortally to stynge.

The sowdan comth hymself soone after this
So roially that wonder is to telle,
And welcometh hire with alle joye and blis.
And thus in murthe and joye I lete hem dwelle;
The fruyt of this matiere is that I telle.
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste
The revel stynte and men goon to hir reste.

The tyme cam this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feeste of which I tolde,
And to the feeste Cristen folk hem dresse,
In general, ye, bothe yonge and olde.
Heere may men feeste and roialtee bihold,
And deyntees mo than I kan yow devyse;
But all to deere they boghte it er they ryse.

O sodeyn wo, that evere art successour
To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitternesse!
The ende of the joye of oure worldly labour!
Wo occupieth the fyn of oure gladnesse.
Herke this conseil, for thy sikernesse:
Upon thy glade day have in thy mynde
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihynde.

For soothly for to tellen at o word,
The sowdan and the Cristen everichone
Been al tohewe and stiked at the bord,
But it were oonly Dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse — cursed krone! —
Hath with hir freendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hirself wolde all the contree lede.

Ne was Surryen noon that was converted,
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al tohewe er he asterted;
And Custance han they take anon, foot hoot,
And in a ship, all steerelees, God woot,
They han hir set, and biddeth hire lerne saille
Out of Surrye agaynward to Ytaille.

A certein tresor that she with hire ladde,
And, sooth to seyn, vitaille greet plentee
They han hire yeven; and clothes eek she hadde;
And forth she sailleth in the salte see.
O my Custance, ful of benignytee!
O emperoures yonge doghter deere,
He that is Lord of Fortune be thy steere!

She blesseth hire, and with ful pitous voys
Unto the croys of Crist thus seyde she:
'O cleere, O weleful auter, hooly croys,
Reed of the Lambes blood, ful of pitee,
That wesshe the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shall drenchen in the depe!

'Victorious tree, proteccion of trewe,
That oonly worthy were for to bere
The Kyng of Hevene, with his woundes newe,
The white Lamb, that hurt was with the spere!
Flemere of feendes out of hym and here
On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,
Me helpe, and yif me myght my lyf tamenden!'

Yeres and dayes fleteth this creature
Thurghout the See of Grece unto the Strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hire aventure.
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After hir deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wol hire dryve
Unto the place ther she shal arryve.

Men myghten asken why she was nat slayn.
Eek at the feeste, who myghte hir body save?
And I answere to that demande agayn,
Who saved Danyel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leon frete er he asterte?
No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful myracle
In hire, for we sholde seen his myghty werkis;
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certeine meenes ofte, as knowen clerkis,
Dooth thyng for certein ende that ful derk is
To mannes wit, that, for oure ignorance,
Ne konne noght knowe his prudent purveiance.

Now sith she was nat at the feeste yslawe,
Who kepte hire fro the drenchyng in the see?
Who kepte Jonas in the fisshes mawe,
Til he was spouted up at Nynyvee?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but He
That kepte peple Ebrayk from hir drenchynge,
With drye feet thurgh out the see passynge.

Who bad the foure spirites of tempest,
That power han tanoyen lond and see,
Bothe north and south and also west and est,
'Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree'?
Soothly the comandour of that was He
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte,
As wel when she wook as whan she slepte.

Where myghte this womman mete and drynkë have?
Thre yeer and moore how lasteth hire vitaille?
Who fedde the Egypcien Marie in the cave,
Or in desert? No wight but Crist, *sanz faille*.
Fyve thousand folk it was as greet mervaille
With loves fyve and fisshes two to feede.
God sente his foyson at hir grete neede.

She dryveth forth into oure occian,
Thurghout oure wilde see, til atte laste
Under an hoold that nempnen I ne kan,
Fer in Northhumberlond, the wawe hire caste.
And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste
That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde;
The wyl of Crist was that she sholde abyde.

The constable of the castel doun is fare
To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte;
And foond this wery womman, ful of care;
He foond also the tresor that she broghte.
In hir langage mercy she bisoghte,
The lyf out of hire body for to twynne,
Hire to delivere of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latyn corrupt was hir speche,
But algates therby was she understonde.
The constable, whan hym lyst no lenger seche,
This woful womman broghte he to the londe.
She kneleth doun and thanketh Goddes sonde;
But what she was she wolde no man seye,
For foul ne fair, thogh that she sholde deye.

She seyde she was so mazed in the see
That she forgat hir mynde, by hir trouthe.
The constable hath of hire so greet pitee,
And eke his wyf, that they wepen for routhe.
She was so diligent, withouten slouthe,
To serve and plesen everich in that place
That alle hir loven that looken in hir face.

This constable and Dame Hermengyld his wyf
Were payens, and that contree everywhere;
But Hermengyld loved hire right as hir lyf.
And Custance hath so longe sojourned there
In orisons, with many a bitter teere,
Til Jesu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermengyld, constablesse of that place.

In al that lond no Cristen dorste route;
Alle Cristen folk been fled fro that contree,
Thurgh payens that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the north by land and see.
To Walys fledde the Cristyanytee
Of olde Britons dwellynge in this ile;
Ther was hir refut for the meene while.

But yet nere Cristene Britons so exiled
That ther nere somme that in hir privetee
Honoured Crist and hethen folk bigiled.
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three.
That oon of hem was blynd and myghte nat see,
But it were with thilke eyen of his mynde,
With whiche men seen whan that they ben blynde.

Bright was the sonne, as in that someres day,
For which the constable and his wyf also
And Custance han ytake the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two
To pleyen and to romen to and fro.
And in hir walk this blynde man they mette,
Croked and oold, with eyen faste yshette.

'In name of Crist,' cride this olde Briton,
'Dame Hermengyld, yif me my sighte agayn!'
This lady weex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbonde, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hire for Jesu Cristes love han slayn,
Til Custance made hire boold, and bad hire wirche
The wyl of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable weex abasshed of that sight,
And seyde, 'What amounteth all this fare?'
Custance answerde, 'Sire, it is Cristes myght,
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.'
And so ferforth she gan oure lay declare
That she the Constable, er that it were eve,
Converteth and on Crist maketh hym bileve.

This constable was no thyng lord of this place
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepte it strongly many wyntres space
Under Alla, kyng of al Northhumbrelond,
That was ful wys and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel heere.
But turne I wole agayn to my mateere.

Sathan, that evere us waiteth to bigile,
Saugh of Custance al hire perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he myghte quite hir while;
And made a yong knyght that dwelte in that toun
Love hire so hoote, of foul affeccioun,
That verraily hym thoughte he sholde spille
But he of hire myghte ones have his wille.

He woweth hire, but it availleth noght;
She wolde do no synne, by no weye.
And for despit he compassed in his thoght
To maken hire on shameful deeth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,
And pryvely upon a nyght he crepte
In Hermengyldes chambre, whil she slepte.

Wery, for-waked in hire orisons,
Slepeth Custance and Hermengyld also.
This knyght, thurgh Sathanas temptacions,
All softely is to the bed ygo,
And kitte the throte of Hermengyld atwo,
And leyde the blody knyf by Dame Custance,
And wente his wey, ther God yeve hym meschance!

Soone after, cometh this constable hoom agayn —
And eek Allá, that kyng was of that lond —
And saugh his wyf despitously yslayn;
For which ful ofte he weep, and wroong his hond.
And in the bed the blody knyf he fond
By Dame Custance. Allas, what myghte she seye?
For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

To kyng Allá was toold al this meschance,
And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wise,
That in a ship was founden Dame Custance,
As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kynges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in mysaventure;

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent bifore the kyng.
This false knyght that hath this treson wroght
Berth hire on hond that she hath doon thys thyng.
But nathelées ther was greet moornyng
Among the peple, and seyn they kan nat gesse
That she had doon so greet a wikkednesse,

For they han seyn hire evere so vertuous,
And lovynge Hermengyld right as hir lyf.
Of this baar witnesse everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermengyld slow with his knyf.
This gentil kyng hath caught a greet motyf
Of this witnesse, and thoghte he wolde enquere
Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere.

Allas, Custance, thou hast no champion,
Ne fighte kanstow noght, so, weylaway!
But He that starf for our redempcion
And boond Sathan — and yet lith ther he lay —
So be thy stronge champion this day;
For but-if Crist open myracle kithe,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swithe.

She sit hire doun on knees, and thus she sayde:
'Immortal God, that savedest Susanne
Fro fals blame, and thou merciful Mayde —
Mary, I meene, doghter to Seint Anne —
Bifore whos child angeles synge Osanne,
If I be giltlees of this felonye,
My socour be, or ellis shal I dye.

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face
Among a prees, of hym that hath be lad
Toward his deeth, wher-as hym gat no grace,
And swich a colour in his face hath had
Men myghte knowe his face that was bistad
Amonges alle the faces in that route?
So stant Custance, and looketh hire aboute.

O queenes, lyvynge in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ladyes everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hire adversitee!
An emperoures doghter stant allone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
O blood roial, that stondest in this drede,
Fer been thy freendes at thy grete nede.

This Alla kyng hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee,
That from hise eyen ran the water doun.
'Now hastily do fecche a book,' quod he,
'And if this knyght wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wol we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal been our justise.

A Briton book written with evaungiles
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
She gilty was. And in the meene whiles,
An hand hym smoot upon the nekke boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon,
And bothe hise eyen broste out of his face,
In sighte of everybody in that place.

A voys was herd in general audience,
And seyde, 'Thou hast desclaundred, giltelees,
The doghter of hooly chirche, in heigh presence!
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees?'
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mazed folk they stoden everichone
For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance
Of hem that hadden wronge suspecion
Upon this sely innocent, Custance;
And for this miracle, in conclusion,
And by Custances mediacion,
The kyng — and many another in that place —
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knyght was slayn for his untrouthe
By juggement of Alla hastifly;
And yet Custance hádde of his deeth greet routhe.
And after this, Jesus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This hooly mayden, that is so bright and sheene;
And thus hath Crist ymaad Custance a queene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,
Of this weddyng but Donegild, and na mo —
The kynges mooder, ful of tirannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte braste atwo;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so.
Hir thoughte a despit that he sholde take
So strange a creature unto his make.

Cs chieo. Mauricius

Me list nat of the chaf, or of the stree,
Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the roialtee
At mariages, or which cours goth biforn;
Who bloweth in the trumpe or in an horn?
The fruyt of every tale is for to seye:
They ete, and drynke, and daunce, and synge, and pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right;
For thogh that wyves be ful hooly thynges,
They moste take in pacience at nyght
Swiche manere necessaries as been plesynges
To folk that han ywedded hem with rynges,
And leye a lite hir hoolynesse aside,
As for the tyme; it may no bet bitide.

On hire he gat a knave childe anon;
And to a bisshop and his constable eke
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is gon
To Scotlond ward, his foomen for to seke.
Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
So longe is goon with childe til that stille
She halt hire chambre, abidyng Cristes wille.

The tyme is come, a knave child she beer;
Mauricius at the fontstoon they hym calle.
This Constable dooth forth come a messageer,
And wroot unto his kyng, that cleped was Alle,
How that this blisful tidyng is bifalle,
And othere tidynges spedeful for to seye.
He taketh the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye.

This messager, to doon his avantage,
Unto the kynges mooder rideth swithe,
And salueth hire ful faire in his langage.
'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanketh God an hundred thousand sithe.
My lady queene hath child, withouten doute,
To joye and blisse to al this regne aboute.

'Lo, heere the lettres seled of this thyng,
That I moot bere with al the haste I may.
If ye wol aught unto youre sone, the kyng,
I am youre servant bothe nyght and day.'
Donegild answerde, 'As now, at this tyme, nay;
But heere al nyght I wol thou take thy reste.
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'

This messager drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were hise lettres pryvely
Out of his box, whil he sleep as a swyn;
And countrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wroght ful synfully,
Unto the kyng direct of this mateere
Fro his constable, as ye shal after heere.

The lettre spak the queene delivered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any while dorste ther endure.
The mooder was an elf, by aventure
Ycomen — by charmes, or by sorcerie;
And every wight hateth hir compaignye.

Wo was this kyng whan he this lettre had sayn,
But to no wight he tolde his sorwes soore,
But of his owene hand he wroot agayn:
'Welcome the sonde of Crist for everemoore
To me that am now lerned in his loore!
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy pleasance!
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinance.)

'Kepeth this child, al be it foul or feir,
And eek my wyf unto myn hoom-comynge.
Crist, whan hym list, may sende me an heir
Moore agreable than this to my likynge.'
This lettre he seleth, pryvely wepynge;
Which to the messager was take soone,
And forth he gooth; ther is namoore to doone.

O messager, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth; thy lymes faltren ay;
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse;
Thy mynde is lorn, thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is turned in a newe array.
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hyd, withouten doute.

O Donègild, I ne have noon Englissh digne
Unto thy malice and thy tirannye,
And therfore to the feend I thee resigne;
Lat hym enditen of thy traitorie.
Fy, mannysh, fy — O, nay, by God, I lye —
Fy, feendlych spirit! for I dar wel telle,
Thogh thou heere walke, thy spirit is in helle.

This messager comth fro the kyng agayn,
And at the kynges moodres court he lighte.
And she was of this messager ful fayn,
And plesed hym in al that ever she myghte.
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte;
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse,
All nyght til the sonne gan aryse.

Eft were hise lettres stolen everychon,
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse:
'The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hangyng and on heigh juÿse,
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his reawme for tabyde
Thre dayes and o quarter of a tyde;

But in the same ship as he hire fond
Hire and hir yonge sone and al hir geere
He sholde putte, and croude hire fro the lond,
And chargen hire she never eft coome theere.'
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have feere,
And slepynge, in thy dreem, been in penance,
Whan Donegild cast al this ordinance.

This messager, on morwe whan he wook,
Unto the castel halt the nexte way,
And to the constable he the lettre took.
And whan that he this pitous lettre say,
Ful ofte he seyde, 'Allas, and weylaway!
Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this world endure,
So ful of synne is many a creature?

'O myghty God, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocentz to spille,
And wikked folk regnen in prosperitee?
O goode Custance! Allas, so wo is me,
That I moot be thy tormentour or deye
On shames deeth; ther is noon oother weye.'

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place,
Whan that the kyng this cursed lettre sente.
And Custance, with a deedly, pale face,
The ferthe day toward the ship she wente;
But nathelees she taketh in good entente
The wyl of Crist, and knelynge on the stronde,
She seyde, 'Lord, ay welcome be thy sonde!

'He that me kepte fro the false blame,
While I was on the lond amonges yow,
He kan me kepe from harm, and eek fro shame,
In salte see, althogh I se noght how.
As strong as evere he was he is yet now.
In hym triste I, and in his mooder deere,
That is to me my seyl, and eek my steere.'

Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm;
And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde,
'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm!'
With that hir coverchief of hir heed she breyde,
And over hise litel eyen she it leyde;
And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
And into hevene hire eyen up she caste.

'Mooder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marie!
Sooth is that thurgh wommanes eggement
Mankynde was lorn, and damned ay to dye;
For which thy child was on a croys yrent.
Thy blisful eyen sawe al his torment;
Thanne is ther no comparison bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thow sawe thy child yslayn bifore thyne eyen,
And yet now lyveth my litel child, *parfay.*
Now, Lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,
Thow glorie of wommanhede, thow faire may,
Thow haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Ruest on every reweful in distresse.

'O litel child, allas, what is thy gilt,
That nevere wroghtest synne as yet, *pardee?*
Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
O mercy, deere constable,' quod she,
'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;
And if thou darst nat saven hym, for blame,
Yet kys hym ones in his fadres name.'

Therwith she looked bakward to the londe,
And seyde, 'Farewel, housbonde routheleés!'
And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
Toward the ship; hir folweth al the prees.
And evere she preyeth hire child to holde his pees;
And taketh hir leve; and with an hooly entente,
She blissed hire, and into ship she wente.

Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hire, ful longe space;
And othere necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde ynogh, heryed be Goddes grace.
For wynd and weder, Almyghty God purchace,
And brynge hire hoom! I kan no bettre seye,
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.

Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.

Alla the kyng comth hoom soone after this
Unto his castel of the which I tolde,
And asketh where his wyf and his child is.
The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
And pleynly al the manere he hym tolde
As ye han herd — I kan telle it no bettre —
And sheweth the kyng his seel and his lettre;

And seyde, 'Lord, as ye comanded me
Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.'
This messager tormented was til he
Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and pleyn,
Fro nyght to nyght in what place he had leyn.
And thus by wit and sobtil enquerynge
Ymagined was by whom this harm gan sprynge.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot,
And all the venym of this cursed dede;
But in what wise certeinly I noot.
Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
His mooder slow — that may men pleynly rede —
For that she traitoure was to hire ligeance.
Thus endeth oldè Donegild, with meschance!

The sorwe that this Alla nyght and day
Maketh for his wyf, and for his child also,
Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
But now wol I unto Custance go,
That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
Fyve yeer and moore, as liked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir ship approched unto the londe.

Under an hethen castel atte laste,
Of which the name in my text noght I fynde,
Custance, and eek hir child, the see up caste.
Almyghty God, that saved al mankynde,
Have on Custance, and on hir child, som mynde,
That fallen is in hethen hand eft soone,
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow soone.

Doun fro the castel comth ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship, and on Custance.
But shortly from the castel, on a nyght,
The lordes styward — God yeve him meschance!
A theef, that hadde reneyed oure creance —
Came into the ship allone, and seyde he sholde
Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon;
Hir child cride, and she cride pitously.
But blisful Marie heelp hire right anon;
For with hir struglyng wel and myghtily,
The theef fil over bord al sodeynly,
And in the see he dreynte, for vengeance.
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie, lo, thyn ende!
Nat oonly that thou feyntest mannes mynde,
But verraily thou wolt his body shende.
Thende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blynde,
Is compleynyng. Hou many oon may men fynde
That noght for werk somtyme, but for thentente
To doon this synne, been outher slayn or shente!

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
Hire to defende agayn this renegat?
O Golias, unmesurable of lengthe,
Hou myghte David make thee so maat?
So yong, and of armure so desolaat,
Hou dorste he looke upon thy dredful face?
Wel may men seen it nas but Goddes grace.

Who yaf Judith corage or hardynesse
To sleen hym Olofernes in his tente,
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
The peple of God? I seye for this entente,
That right as God spirit of vigour sente
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sente he myght and vigour to Custance.

Forth gooth hir ship thurghout the narwe mouth
Of Jubaltare and Septe, dryvynge alway,
Somtyme west, and somtyme north and south,
And somtyme est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes mooder — blessed be she ay! —
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endelees goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevynesse.

Now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romayn emperour,
That out of Surrye hath by lettres knowe
The slaughtre of Cristen folk, and dishonour
Doon to his doghter by a fals traytour —
I mene the cursed, wikked sowdanesse,
That at the feeste leet sleen both moore and lesse;

For which this emperour hath sent anon
His senatour, with roial ordinance
And othere lordes, God woot, many oon,
On Surryens to taken heigh vengeance.
They brennen, sleen, and brynge hem to meschance
Ful many a day; but shortly — this is thende —
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome ward, saillynge ful roially,
And mette the ship dryvynge, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously.
Nothyng knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array; ne she nyl seye
Of hire estaat, althogh she sholde deye.

He bryngeth hire to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hire and hir yonge sone also;
And with the senatour she ladde hir lyf.
Thus kan Oure Lady bryngen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo.
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,
In hooly werkes evere, as was hir grace.

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for all that, she knew hire never the moore.
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to Kyng Alla, which I spake of yoore,
That wepeth for his wyf, and siketh soore,
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

Kyng Alla, which that hadde his mooder slayn,
Upon a day fil in swich repentance
That, if I shortly tellen shal and playn,
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance,
And putte hym in the popes ordinance,
In heigh and logh; and Jesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve hise wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurghout the toun is born,
How Alla kyng shal comen on pilgrymage,
By herbergeours that wenten hym biforn;
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood hym agayns, and many of his lynage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence,
As to doon any kyng a reverence.

Greet cheere dooth this noble senatour
To Kyng Alla, and he to hym also.
Everich of hem dooth oother greet honour;
And so bifel that in a day or two
This senatour is to Kyng Alla go
To feste; and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his compaignye.

Som men wolde seyn at requeste of Custance
This senatour hath lad this child to feeste.
I may nat tellen every circumstance;
Be as be may, ther was he at the leeste.
But sooth is this, that at his moodres heeste,
Biforn Alla, durynge the metes space,
The child stood, lookynge in the kynges face.

This Alla kyng hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
'Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?'
'I noot,' quod he, 'by God, and by Seint John.
A mooder he hath, but fader hath he noon
That I of woot.' But shortly, in a stounde,
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

'But God woot,' quod this senatour also,
'So vertuous a lyvere in my lyf
Ne saugh I nevere as she, ne herde of mo,
Of worldly wommen, maydē, ne of wyf.
I dar wel seyn hir hadde levere a knyf
Thurghout hir brest than ben a womman wikke;
There is no man koude brynge hire to that prikke.'

Now was this child as lyke unto Custance
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of Dame Custance, and theron mused he
If that the childes mooder were aught she
That is his wyf; and pryvely he sighte,
And spedde hym fro the table that he myghte.

'*Parfay*,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn heed.
I oghte deme, of skilful juggement,
That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'
And afterward he made his argument:
'What woot I, if that Crist have hyder ysent
My wyf by see, as wel as he hire sente
To my contree fro thennes that she wente?'

And after noon, hoom with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce.
This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
And hastifly he sente after Custaunce.
But trusteth weel, hire liste nat to daunce,
Whan that she wiste wherfore was that sonde;
Unnethe upon hir feet she myghte stonde.

Whan Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hire grette,
And weep that it was routhe for to see;
For at the firste look he on hire sette,
He knew wel verraily that it was she.
And she, for sorwe, as doumb stant as a tree —
So was hir herte shet in hir distresse,
Whan she remembred his unkyndenesse.

Twyes she swowned in his owene sighte.
He weep, and hym excuseth pitously.
'Now God,' quod he, 'and [alle] hise halwes brighte
So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
That of youre harm as giltelees am I
As is Maurice my sone, so lyk youre face;
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!

Long was the sobbyng and the bitter peyne,
Er that hir woful hertes myghte cesse.
Greet was the pitee for to heere hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encresse.
I pray yow alle my labour to relesse;
I may nat telle hir wo until tomorwe,
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But finally, whan that the sothe is wist,
That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,
I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist;
And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two
That, save the joye that lasteth everemo,
Ther is noon lyk that any creature
Hath seyn, or shal, whil that the world may dure.

Tho preyde she hir housbonde mekely,
In relief of hir longe, pitous pyne,
That he wolde preye hir fader specially
That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne
To vouche sauf som day with hym to dyne.
She preyde hym eek he wolde, by no weye,
Unto hir fader no word of hire seye.

Som men wold seyn how that the child Maurice
Dooth this message unto this emperour;
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
To hym that was of so sovereyn honour,
As he that is of Cristen folk the flour,
Sente any child; but it is bet to deeme
He wente hymself; and so it may wel seeme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to dyner, as he hym bisoughte.
And wel rede I, he looked bisily
Upon this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
Alla goth to his in, and as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste, in every wise,
As ferforth as his konnyng may suffise.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan hym dresse,
And eek his wyf, this emperour to meete.
And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse;
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun, and falleth hym to feete;
'Fader,' quod she, 'youre yonge child, Custance,
Is now ful clene out of youre remembrance.

'I am youre doghter, Custancê,' quod she,
'That whilom ye han sent unto Surrye.
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone, and dampned for to dye.
Now, goode fader, mercy I yow crye!
Sende me namoore unto noon hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heere of his kyndenesse.'

Who kan the pitous joye tellen al
Bitwixe hem thre, syn they been thus ymette?
But of my tale make an ende I shal;
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to dyner they hem sette;
In joye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle,
A thousand foold wel moore than I kan telle.

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lyved cristenly;
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour.
But I lete all his storie passen by;
Of Custance is my tale specially;
In the olde Romane geestes may men fynde
Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in mynde.

This kyng Alla, whan he his tyme say,
With his Custance, his hooly wyf so sweete,
To Engelond been they come the righte way,
Wher-as they lyve in joye and in quiete.
But litel while it lasteth, I yow heete,
Joye of this world; for tyme wol nat abyde —
Fro day to nyght it changeth as the tyde.

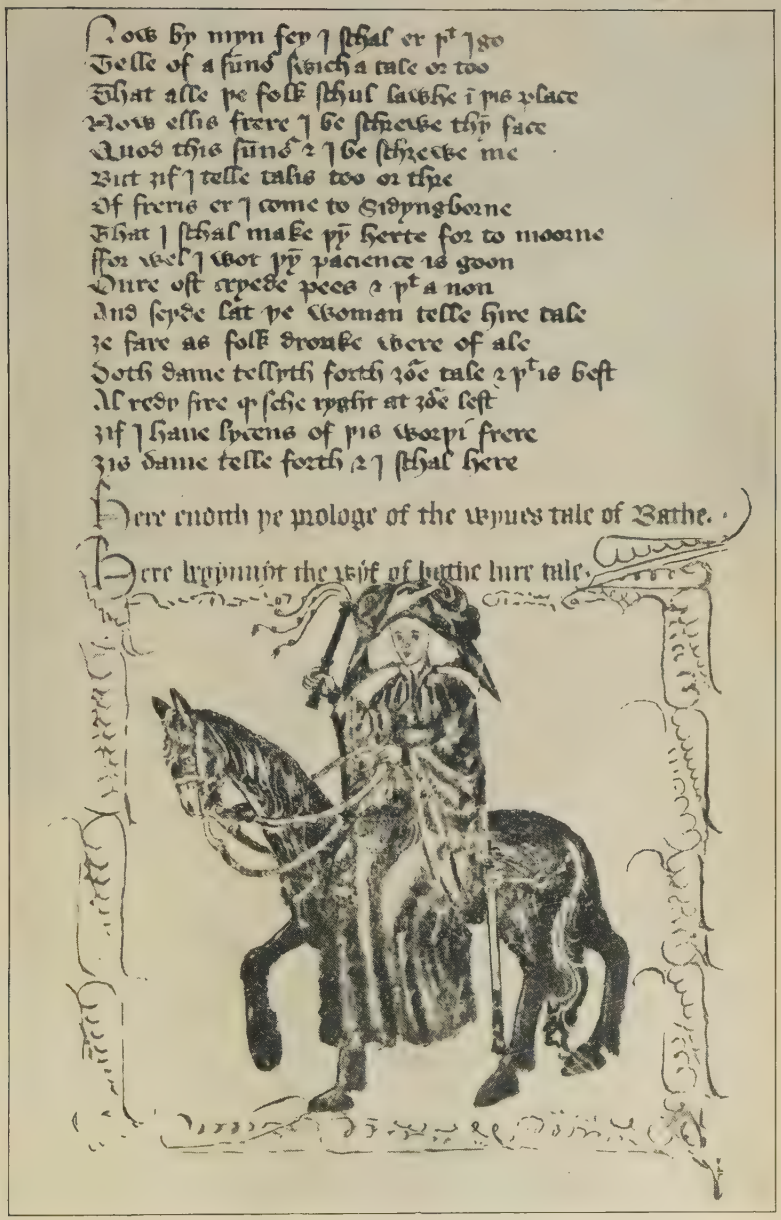
Who lyved evere in swich delit o day
That hym ne moeved outher conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kynnes affray,
Envye, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel while in joye, or in plesance,
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance;

For Deeth, that taketh of heigh and logh his rente,
Whan passed was a yeer, evene as I gesse,
Out of this world this Kyng Alla he hente;
For whom Custance hath ful greet hevynesse —
Now lat us praye to God his soule blesse! —
And Dame Custance, finally to seye,
Toward the toun of Rome goth hir weye.

To Rome is come this hooly creature,
And fyndeth hire freendes ther bothe hoole and sounde.
Now is she scaped al hire aventure;
And whan that she hir fader hath yfounde,
Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde;
Wepynge for tendrenesse, in herte blithe,
She heryeth God an hundred thousand sithe.

In vertu and in hooly almus dede
They lyven alle, and nevere asonder wende;
Till deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede.
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende. 1159
Now Jesu Crist, that of his myght may sende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us allê that been in this place! 1162
Amen

Heere endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe.


Now by myn fey I schal er pt I go
Telle of a sunnor swich a tale or too
That alle ye folk schul lawhe in yis place
Now ellis frere I be schrewe thy face
Quod this sunnor & I be schrewe me
But zif I telle talis too or thre
Of freris er I come to Sidyngborne
That I schal make yy herte for to moorne
For wel I wot yy pacience is goon
Oure oft cryede pees & pt a non
And seyde lat ye woman telle hire tale
Ze fare as folk dronke were of ale
Doth dame tellyth forth zoe tale & pt is best
Al redy fire q sche ryght at zoe lest
Zif I haue lycens of yis worpi frere
Zis dame telle forth & I schal here
Here endith ye prologe of the wyues tale of Bathe.
Here begynnyt the wyf of bathe lure tale.

THE WIFE OF BATH

From MS Cambridge Gg. 4.27. One of four pictures of the pilgrims left by the vandals who cut out the rest.

[FRAGMENT III (GROUP D)
THE WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE]

The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

'Experience, though noon auctoritee
Were in this world, were right ynogh to me
To speke of wo that is in mariage;
For, lordynges, sith I twelf yeer was of age —
Ythonked be God that is eterne on lyve! —
Housbondes at chirche dore I have had fyve,
If I so ofte myghte have wedded bee.
And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
But me was toold certeyn, nat longe agoon is,
That sith that Crist ne wente nevere but onis
To weddyng in the Cane of Galilee,
That by thilke ensample taughte he me
That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
Herkne eek, lo! which a sharpe word for the nones
Beside a welle Jesus, god and man,
Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan.
"Thou hast yhad fyve housbondes," quod he,
"And that ilke man that now hath thee
Is noght thyn housbonde"; thus seyde he certeyn.
What that he mente therby I kan nat seyn,
But that I axe why that the fifthe man
Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan.
How manye myghte she have in mariage?
Yet herde I nevere tellen in myn age
Upon this nombre diffinicioun.
Men may devyne and glosen up and doun,
But — wel I woot — expres, withoute lye,
God bad us for to wexe and multiplye.
That gentil text kan I wel understonde.

Eek wel I woot he seyde myn housbonde
Sholde lete fader and mooder and take me;
But of no nombre mencion made he
Of bigamye or of octogamye.
Why sholde men speken of it vileynye?
'Lo, heere! the wise kyng, Daun Salomon,
I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon.
Blessed be God that I have wedded fyve!
Welcome the sixte, whan that evere he shal!
Forsothe I wol nat kepe me chaast in al;
Whan myn housbonde is fro the world ygon,
Som cristen man shal wedde me anon;
For thanne thapostle seith that I am free
To wedde, a Goddes half, where it liketh me.
'What rekketh me thogh folk seye vileynye
Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?
I woot wel Abraham was an hooly man
And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I kan,
And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two;
And many another holy man also.
Whanne saugh ye evere in any manere age
That hye God defended mariage
By expres word? I pray you telleth me.
Or where comanded he virginitee?
I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
Whan thapostel speketh of maydenhede,
He seyde that precept therof hadde he noon.
Men may conseille a womman to been oon,
But conseillyng is nat comandement.
He putte it in oure owene juggement;
For hadde God comanded maydenhede,
Thanne hadde he dampned weddyng with the dede.
And certein if ther were no seed ysowe,
Virginitee, wherof thanne sholde it growe?
Poul dorste nat comanden atte leeste
A thyng of which his maister yaf noon heeste.
The dart is set up of virginitee,
Cacche whoso may, who renneth best lat see!
'But this word is nat taken of every wight,

– But ther-as God lust gyve it of his myght.
I woot wel thē apostel was a mayde;
But nathelees, thogh that he wroot and sayde
He wolde that every wight were swich as he,
Al nys but conseil to virginitee.
And for to been a wyf he yaf me leve
Of indulgence; so it is no repreve
To wedde me, if that my make dye,
Withouten excepcion of bigamye.
– This is al and som: he heeld virginitee
Moore profiteth than weddyng in freletee —
Freeltee clepe I but-if that he and she
Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.
'I graunte it wel. I have noon envie
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamye.
Hem liketh to be clene, body and goost.
Of myn estaat I nyl nat make no boost;
For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold
He nath nat every vessel al of gold;
Somme been of tree and doon hir lord servyse.
God clepeth folk to hym in sondry wyse,
And everich hath of God a propre yifte —
Som this, som that, as hym liketh shifte.
'Virginitee is greet perfeccion,
And continence eek, with devocion;
But Crist, that of perfeccion is welle,
Bad nat every wight sholde go selle
All that he hadde and gyve it to the poore,
And in swich wise folwe hym and his foore.
He spak to hem that wolde lyve parfitly;
And, lordynges, by youre leve, that am nat I.
I wol bistowe the flour of myn age
In the actes and in fruyt of mariage.
An housbonde I wol have, I nyl nat lette,
Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
And have his tribulacion withal
Upon his flessh whil that I am his wyf.
I have the power durynge al my lyf
Upon his propre body and noght he.

Right thus the apostel tolde it unto me,
And bad oure housbondes for to love us weel.
Al this sentence me liketh every deel.'
Up stirte the Pardoner, and that anon.
'Now dame,' quod he, 'by God and by Seint John,
Ye been a noble prechour in this cas.
I was aboute to wedde a wyf; allas!
What sholde I bye it on my flessh so deere?
Yet hadde I levere wedde no wyf to yeere.'
'Abyde,' quod she, 'my tale is nat bigonne!
Nay, thou shalt drynken of another tonne,
Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.
And whan that I have toold the forth my tale
Of tribulacion that is in mariage —
Of which I am expert in al myn age; —
(This to seyn, myself have been the whippe) —
Than maystow chese wheither thou wolt sippe
Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.
Be war of it, er thou to ny approche,
For I shal tell ensamples mo than ten.
"Whoso that wol nat be war by othere men,
By hym shul othere men corrected be."
The same wordes writeth Ptholomee;
Rede in his Almageste and take it there.'
'Dame, I wolde praye, if youre wyl it were,'
Seyde this Pardoner, 'as ye bigan,
Telle forth youre tale; spareth for no man,
And teche us yonge men of youre praktike.'
'Gladly, sires, sith it may yow like.
But yet I praye to al this compaignye,
If that I speke after my fantasye,
As taketh not agrief of that I seye,
For myn ententë is but for to pleye.
'Now, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.
As evere moote I drynken wyn or ale,
I shal seye sooth. Of tho housbondes that I hadde,
As thre of hem were goode and two were badde.
The thre were goode men, and riche, and olde;
Unnethe myghte they the statut holde

In which that they were bounden unto me.
Ye woot wel what I meene of this, pardee.
And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.
They had me yeven hir gold and hir tresoor;
Me neded nat do lenger diligence
To wynne hir love or doon hem reverence.
They loved me so wel, by God above,
That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love.
A wys womman wol sette hire evere in oon
To gete hire love ther-as she hath noon;
But sith I hadde hem hooliy in myn hond,
And sith they hadde me yeven all hir lond,
What sholde I taken heede hem for to plese,
But it were for my profit and myn ese?
I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey,
That many a nyght they songen "weilawey!"
The bacon was nat fet for hem, I trowe,
That som men han in Essexe at Dunmowe.
I governed hem so wel after my lawe
That ech of hem was ful blisful and fawe
To brynge me gaye thynges fro the fayre.
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire,
For God it woot, I chidde hem spitously.
'Now herkneth hou I baar me proprely,
Ye wise wyves, that kan understonde.
'Thus shul ye speke and beren hem on honde;
For half so boldëly kan ther no man
Swere and lyë as a womman kan.
I sey nat this by wyves that been wyse,
But-if it be whan they hem mysavyse.
A wys wyf if that she kan hir good,
Shal beren hym on honde the cow is wood,
And take witnesse of hir owene mayde
Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde:
'"Sire olde kaynard, is this thyn array?
Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?
She is honoured over-al ther she gooth;
I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty clooth.
What dostow at my neighebores hous?

Is she so fair? artow so amorous?
What rowne ye with oure mayde? *Benedicite!*
Sire olde lecchour, lat thy japes be!
And if I have a gossib or a freend,
Withouten gilt, thou chidest as a feend
If that I walke or pleye unto his hous.
Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,
And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!
Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief
To wedde a poure womman, for costage;
And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,
Thanne seistow that it is a tormentrie
To soffren hire pride and hire malencolie.
And if that she be fair — thou verray knave! —
Thou seyst that every holour wol hire have,—
She may no while in chastitee abyde
That is assailled upon ech a syde.
"'Thou seyst som folk desiren us for richesse,
Somme for oure shape, and somme for oure fairnesse,
And som for she kan either synge or daunce,
And som for gentillesse and daliaunce,
Som for hir handes and hir armes smale.
Thus goth al to the devel, by thy tale.
Thou seyst men may nat kepe a castel wal,
It may so longe assailled been over-al.
"'And if that she be foul, thou seist that she
Coveiteth every man that she may se;
For as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe,
Til that she fynde som man hire to chepe;
Ne noon so grey goos gooth ther in the lake
As, seïstow, wol been withoute make;
And seyst it is an hard thyng for to wĕlde
A thyng that no man wole his thankes helde.
Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde,
And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,
Ne no man that entendeth unto hevene.
With wilde thonder dynt and firy levene
Moote thy welked nekke be to-broke!
"'Thow seyst that droppyng houses and eek smoke

And chidyng wyves maken men to flee
Out of hir owene houses; (a, *benedicitee*,
What eyleth swich an old man for to chide?)
"Thow seyst we wyves wol oure vices hide
Til we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe.
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.
'"Thou seist that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
They been assayd at diverse stoundes;
Bacyns, lavours, er that men hem bye;
Spoones and stooles, and al swich housbondrye;
And so been pottes, clothes, and array;
But folk of wyves maken noon assay
Til they be wedded. (Olde dotard shrewe!)
Thanne, seïstow, we wol oure vices shewe.
'"Thou seist also that it displeseth me
But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee;
And but thou poure alwey upon my face
And clepe me 'faire dame' in every place;
And but thou make a feeste on thilke day
That I was born and make me fressh and gay;
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere withinne my bour,
And to my fadres folk and hise allyes.
Thus seistow, olde barelful of lyes!
'"And yet of oure apprentice, Janekyn,
For his crispe heer, shynynge as gold so fyn,
And for he squiereth me bothe up and doun,
Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun.
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed tomorwe.
'"But tel me this. Why hydestow — with sorwe! —
The keyes of my cheste awey fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee.
What! wenestow make an ydiot of oure dame?
Now by that lord that called is Seint Jame,
Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh thou were wood,
Be maister of my body and of my good;
That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne eyen.
What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyen?
I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chiste.

Thou sholdest seye, 'Wyf, go wher thee liste;
Taak youre disport; I wol nat leve no talys;
I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, Dame Alys.'
We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
Wher that we goon; we wol ben at our large.
"'Of alle men yblessed moot he be,
The wise astrologien, Daun Ptholome,
That seith this proverbe in his Almageste:
'Of álle mén his wýsdom ís the hyéste
That rekketh nevere who hath the world in honde.'
By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,
Have thou ynogh, what thar thee recche or care
How myrily that othere folkes fare?
"'Thou seyst also that if we make us gay
With clothyng and with precious array,
That it is peril of oure chastitee.
And yet — with sorwe! — thou most enforce thee
And seye thise wordes in the apostles name:
'In habit maad with chastitee and shame
Ye wommen shul apparaille yow,' quod he,
'And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,
As perles, ne with gold ne clothes riche.' —
After thy text ne after thy rubriche
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.
"'Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;
For whoso wolde senge a cattes skyn,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in.
And if the cattes skyn be slyk and gay,
She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,
But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,
To shewe hir skyn and goon a-caterwawed;
This is to seye, if I be gay, sire shrewe,
I wol renne out my bórel for to shewe.
"'Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyen?
Thogh thou preye Argus with hise hundred eyen
To be my wardecors as he kan best,
In feith, he shal nat kepe me, but me lest;
Yet koude I make his berd, so moot I thee!
"'Thou seydest eek that ther been thynges thre,

The whiche thynges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight may endure the ferthe.
O leeve sire shrewe, Jesu shorte thy lyf!
Yet prechestow and seyst, an hateful wyf
Yrekened is for oon of thise meschances.
Been ther none othere of thy resemblances
That ye may likne youre parables unto,
But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho?
'"Thou likenest wommenes love to helle;
To bareyne lond ther water may nat dwelle.
Thou liknest it also to wilde fyr;
The moore it brenneth the moore it hath desir
To consumen everythyng that brent wole be.
Thou seyst, right as wormes shendeth a tree,
Right so a wyf destroyeth hire housbond;
This knowe they that been to wyves bonde."
'Lordynges, right thus, as ye have understonde,
Baar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde
That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse.
And al was fals; but that I took witnesse
On Janekyn and on my nece also.
O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo —
Ful giltelees, by Goddes sweete pyne! —
For as an hors I koude byte and whyne.
I koude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,
Or elles often tyme hadde I been spilt.
"Whóso cómeth first to mílle first grýnt";
I pleyned first, so was oure werre ystynt.
They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve
Of thyng of which they nevere agilte hir lyve.
'Of wenches wolde I beren hym on honde,
Whan that for syk unnethes myghte he stonde.
Yet tikled it his herte, for that he
Wende that I hadde of hym so greet chiertee.
I swoor that al my walkynge out by nyghte
Was for tespye wenches that he dighte.
Under that colour hadde I many a myrthe,
For al swich thyng was yeven us in oure byrthe:
"Deceite, wepyng, spynnyng, God hath yeve

To wommen kyndely whil that they may lyve."
And thus of o thyng I avaunte me,
Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech degree —
By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thyng,
As by continueel murmure or grucchyng.
That made me that evere I wolde hem chide;
For thogh the pope hadde seten hem biside,
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord;
For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.
As helpe me verray God omnipotent,
Though I right now sholde make my testament,
I ne owe hem nat a word that it nys quit.
I broghte it so aboute by my wit
That they moste yeve it up, as for the beste,
Or elles hadde we nevere been in reste;
For thogh he looked as a wood leon,
Yet sholde he faille of his conclusion.
'Thanne wolde I seyé: "Goodé lief, taak keepe
How mekely lookéth Wilkyn, oure sheepe!
Com neer, my spouse; lat me ba thy cheke.
Ye sholde been al pacient and meke
And han a sweete spiced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of Jobes pacience.
Suffreth alwey, syn ye so wel kan preche;
And but ye do, certein we shal yow teche
That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.
Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees;
And sith a man is moore resonable
Than womman is, ye moste been suffrable."
Swiche manere wordes hadde we on honde.
Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.
'My fourthe housbonde was a revelour;
This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour;
And I was yong, and ful of ragerye,
Stibourne, and strong, and joly as a pye.
Wel koude I daunce to an harpe smale,
And synge, ywis, as any nyghtyngale,
Whan I had dronke a draughte of sweete wyn.
Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn

That with a staf birafte his wyf hire lyf
For she drank wyn — thogh I hadde been his wyf,
He sholde nat han daunted me fro drynke.
And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke.

. . . . . .

'But Lord Crist, whan that it remembreth me
Upon my yowthe and on my jolitee,
It tikleth me aboute myn herte roote
Unto this day; it dooth myn herte boote
That I have had my world as in my tyme!
But Age, allas! that al wole envenyme,
Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith.
Lat go! farewel! the devel go therwith!
The flour is goon; ther is namoore to telle;
The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle.
'But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde;
Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde.
'I seye I hadde in herte greet despit
That he of any oother had delit.
But he was quit, by God and by Seint Joce!
I made hym of the same wode a croce.
Nat of my body in no foul manere,
But certeinly I made folk swich cheere
That in his owene grece I made hym frye
For angre and for verray jalousye.
By God, in erthe I was his purgatorie;
For which, I hope, his soule be in glorie.
For God it woot, he sat ful ofte and song,
Whan that his shoo ful bitterly hym wrong.
Ther was no wight save God and he that wiste
In many wise how soorë I hym twiste.
He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
And lith ygrave under the roode beem,
Al is his tombe noght so curyus
As was the sepulcre of hym Daryus,
Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly.
It nys but wast to burye hym preciously.
Lat hym fare wel, God yeve his soule reste!
He is now in his grave and in his cheste.

'Now of my fifthe housbonde wol I telle —
God lete his soule nevere come in helle!
And yet was he to me the mooste shrewe;
That feele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
And evere shal unto myn endyng day.
I trowe I lovéd hým best for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me.
We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye,
In this matere a queynte fantasye:
Wayte what thyng we may nat lightly have,
Therafter wol we crie al day and crave;
Forbede us thyng, and that desiren we;
Preesse on us faste and thanne wol we fle;
With daunger, oute we al oure chaffare.
Greet prees at market maketh deere ware,
And to greet cheepe is holde at litel prys;
This knoweth every womman that is wys.

'My fifthe housbonde, God his soule blesse!
Which that I took for love and no richesse,
He somtyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
And hádde left scóle and wente at hom to bord
With my gossib, dwellynge in oure toun —
God have hir soule! — hir name was Alisoun.
She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
Bet than oure parisshe preest, as moot I thee.

'And so bifel that ones in a Lente —
So often tymes I to my gossyb wente;
For evere yet I loved to be gay,
And for to walke in March, Averill, and May
Fro hous to hous to heere sondry talys —
That Jankyn clerk, and my gossyb, Dame Alys,
And I myself into the feeldes wente.
Myn housbonde was at London al the Lente;
I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
And for to se and eek for to be seye
Of lusty folk. What wiste I wher my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
Therfore I made my visitacions
To vigilies, and to processions,

To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
To pleyes of myracles, and to mariages,
And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes —
Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,
Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
And wostow why? for they were used weel.
'Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.
I seye that in the feeldes walked we
Till trewely we hadde swich daliance,
This clerk and I, that of my purveiance
I spak to hym and seyde hym how that he,
If I were wydwe, sholde wedde me.
For certeinly — I sey for no bobance —
Yet was I nevere withouten purveiance
Of mariage, nof othere thynges eek;
I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek
That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
And if that faille thanne is al ydo.
'I bar hym on honde he hadde enchanted me —
My dame taughte me that soutiltee —
And eek, I seyde, I mette of hym al nyght
He wolde han slayn me as I lay up right;
And al my bed was ful of verray blood;
But yet I hope that he shal do me good,
For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.
And al was fals; I dremed of it right naught,
But I folwed ay my dames loore,
As wel of this as of othere thynges moore. — — — —
'But now, sire, lat me se? What I shal seyn?
A ha! By God, I have my tale ageyn!
'Whan that my fourthe housbonde was on beere,
I weepe algate and made sory cheere,
As wyves mooten, for it is usage,
And with my coverchief covered my visage.
But for that I was purveyed of a make,
I wepte but smal, and that I undertake!
'To chirche was myn housbonde born a-morwe
With neighebores, that for hym maden sorwe.
And Jankyn, oure clerk, was oon of tho.

As help me God, whan that I saugh hym go
After the beere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire
That al myn herte I yaf unto his hoold!
He was, I trowe, a twenty wynter oold;
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth.
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth;
Gat tothed I was; and that bicam me weel.
I hadde the prente of Seinte Venus seel.
As help me God, I was a lusty oon,
And faire, and riche, and yong, and wel bigon!
For certes, I am al Venerien
In feelynge, and myn herte is Marcien.
Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse;
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse.
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
Allas! allas! that evere love was synne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacion,
By vertu of my constellacion;
For God so wys be my savacion,
I ne loved nevere by no discrecion,
But evere folwede myn appetit,
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit.
I took no kepe, so that he liked me,
How poore he was, ne eek of what degree.
'What sholde I seye? but at the monthes ende
This joly clerk, Jankyn, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with greet solempnytee,
And to hym yaf I al the lond and fee
That evere was me yeven therbifoore.
But afterward repented me ful soore;
He nolde suffre nothyng of my list.
By God, he smoot me ones on the lyst —
For-that I rente out of his book a leef —
That of the strook myn ere wax al deef.
'Stibourne I was, as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a verray jangleresse;
And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
From hous to hous, although he had it sworn;

For which he often tymes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romayn geestes teche:
How he Symplicius Gallus lefte his wyf,
And hire forsok for terme of al his lyf,
Noght but for open-heveded he hir say,
Lokynge out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romayn tolde he me by name,
That for his wyf was at a someres game
Withouten his wityng, he forsook hire eke.
And thanne wolde he upon his Bible seke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste
Where he comandeth, and forbedeth faste,
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute.
Thanne wolde he seye right thus, withouten doute:
"Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,
"And priketh his blynde hors over the falwes,
"And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
"Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes."
But al for noght; I sette noght an hawe
Of his proverbes nof his olde sawe,
Ne I wolde nat of hym corrected be.
I hate hym that my vices telleth me;
And so doo mo, God woot, of us than I.
This made hym with me wood al outrely,
I nolde noght forbere hym in no cas.
'Now wol I seye yow sooth, by Seint Thomas,
Why that I rente out of his book a leef,
For which he smoot me so that I was deef.
'He hadde a book that gladly, nyght and day,
For his desport he wolde rede alway —
He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste —
At whiche book he lough alwey ful faste.
And eek ther was somtyme a clerk at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
That made a book agayn Jovinian;
In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,
Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys —
That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys —
And eek the Parables of Salomon,

Ovides Art, and bookes many on;
And alle thise were bounden in o volume.
And every nyght and day was his custume,
Whan he hadde leyser and vacacion
From oother worldly occupacion,
To reden on this book of wikked wyves.
He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
Than been of goode wyves in the Bible.
For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speke good of wyves —
But if it be of hooly seintes lyves —
Ne of noon oother womman never the mo.
Who peynted the leon? Tel me who.!
By God, if wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
Than all the mark of Adam may redresse!
The children of Mercurie and of Venus
Been in hir wirkyng ful contrarius;
Mercurie loveth wysdam and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispence;
And for hire diverse disposicion
Ech falleth in otheres exaltacion.
And thus, God woot, Mercurie is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed.
Therfore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
The clerk, whan he is oold and may noght do
Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
Thanne sit he doun and writ in his dotage
That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage.
'But now to purpos why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book, *pardee!*
Upon a nyght Jankyn, that was oure sire,
Redde on his book, as he sat by the fire,
Of Eva first: that for hir wikkednesse
Was al mankynde broght to wrecchednesse;
For which Jesu Crist hymself was slayn,
That boghte us with his herte blood agayn.

Lo, heere, expres of womman may ye fynde
That womman was the los of al mankynde.
'Tho redde he me how Sampson loste hise heres:
Slepynge, his lemman kitte it with hir sheres;
Thurgh which treson loste he bothe hise eyen.
'Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules, and of his Dianyre,
That caused hym to sette hymself afyre.
'Nothyng forgat he the penaunce and wo
That Socrates hadde with hise wyves two.
'Of Clitermystra for hire lecherye,
That falsly made hire housbonde for to dye,
He redde it with ful good devocion.
'He tolde me eek for what occasion
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf —
Myn housbonde hadde a legende of his wyf.
'Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively unto the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbonde hidde hym in a place;
For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.
'Of Lyvia tolde he me, and of Lucye;
They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye —
That oon for love, that oother was for hate.
Lyvia hir housbonde upon an even late
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo;
Lucia likerous loved hire housbonde so
That for he sholde alwey upon hire thynke
She yaf hym swich a manere love drynke
That he was deed er it were by the morwe.
And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.
'Thanne tolde he me how oon Latumyus
Compleyned unto his felawe Arrius
That in his gardyn growed swich a tree
On which, he seyde, how that hise wyves thre
Hanged hemself for herte despitus.
"O leeve brother," quod this Arrius,
"Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardyn planted it shal bee."
'Of latter date of wyves hath he red,

That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,
And somme han dryve nayles in hir brayn
Whil that they slepte, and thus they han hem slayn.
Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hire drynke.
'He spak moore harm than herte may bithynke;
And therwithal he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.
"Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun
Than with a womman usynge for to chyde."
"Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf doun in the hous.
They been so wikked and contrarious
They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay."
He seyde, "A womman cast hir shame away
Whan she cast of hir smok"; and forthermo
"A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is lyk a gold ryng in a sowes nose."
'Who wolde leeve, or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne?
And whan I saugh he wolde nevere fyne
To reden on this cursed book al nyght,
Al sodeynly thre leves have I plyght
Out of his book, right as he radde; and eke
I with my fest so took hym on the cheke
That in oure fyr he fil bakward adoun.
And he up stirte, as dooth a wood leoun,
And with his fest he smoot me on the heed
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
And whan he saugh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde han fled his way;
Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde.
"O hastow slayn me, false theef?" I seyde,
"And for my land thus hastow mordred me?
Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee!"
'And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,
And seyde, "Deere suster Alisoun,
As help me God, I shal thee nevere smyte!
That I have doon, it is thyself to wyte.

Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke!"
And yet eftsoones I hitte hym on the cheke,
And seyde, "Theef, thus muchel am I wreke!
Now wol I dye; I may no lenger speke!"
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,
We fille acorded by us-selven two.
He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond,
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge, and of his hond also;
And made hym brenne his book anon right tho.
And whan that I hadde geten unto me
By maistrie al the soveraynetee,
And that he seyde, "Myn owene, trewe wyf,
Do as thee lust to terme of al thy lyf;
Keepe thyn honour, and keepe eek myn estaat" —
After that day, we hadden never debaat.
God helpe me so, I was to hym as kynde
As any wyf from Denmark unto Ynde;
And also trewe; and so was he to me.
I prey to God, that sit in magestee,
So blesse his soule for his mercy deere!
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol heere.'

Biholde the wordes bitwene the Somonour and the Frere.

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this.
'Now, dame,' quod he, 'so have I joye or blis,
This is a long preamble of a tale.'
And whan the Somonour herde the Frere gale,
'Lo,' quod the Somonour, 'Goddes armes two!
A frere wol entremette him everemo.
Lo, goode men, a flye, and eek a frere,
Wol falle in every dysshë and mateere.
What spekestow of preambulacioun?
What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit doun!
Thou lettest oure disport in this manere.'
'Ye, woltow so, sire Somonour?' quod the Frere.
'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,

Telle of a somonour swich a tale or two
That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.'
'Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy face,'
Quod this Somonour; 'and I bishrewe me
But-if I telle tales two or thre
Of freres, er I come to Sidyngborne,
That I shal make thyn herte for to morne,
For wel I woot thy pacience is gon.'
Oure Hooste cride, 'Pees! and that anon!'
And seyde, 'Lat the womman telle hire tale.
Ye fare as folk that dronken were of ale.
Do, dame, telle forth youre tale and that is best.'
'Al redy, sire,' quod she, 'right as yow lest,
If I have licence of this worthy Frere.'
'Yis, dame,' quod he; 'tel forth, and I wol heere.'

Heere endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe and bigynneth hir Tale.

In tholde dayes of the kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
All was this land fulfild of fairye;
The elf queene with hir joly compaignye
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.
This was the olde opinion, as I rede —
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago.
But now kan no man se none elves mo;
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of lymytours and othere hooly freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem
As thikke as motes in the sonne beem,
Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes —
This maketh that ther been no fairyes;
For ther-as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the lymytour hymself
In undermeles and in morwenynges,
And seyth his matyns and his hooly thynges,

As he gooth in his lymytacioun.
Wómmen may go saufly up and doun.
In every bussh, or under every tree,
Ther is noon oother incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.
And so bifel it that this kyng Arthour
Hadde in his hous a lusty bacheler,
That on a day cam ridynge fro ryver;
And happed that, allone as he was born,
He saugh a mayde walkynge hym biforn;
Of which mayde anon, maugreé hir heed,
By verray force birafte hire maydenhed.
For which oppression was swich clamour
And swich pursute unto the kyng Arthour
That dampned was this knyght for to be deed
By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed —
Paraventure swich was the statut tho —
But that the queene, and othere ladyes mo,
So longe preyeden the kyng of grace
Til he his lyf hym graunted in the place,
And yaf hym to the queene, al at hir wille,
To chése wheither she wólde hym sáve or spille.
The queene thanketh the kyng with al hir myght;
And after this, thus spak she to the knyght,
Whan that she saugh hir tyme upon a day:
'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich array
That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
I grantę thee lyf if thou kanst tellen me
What thyng is it that wommen moost desiren.
Be war, and keepe thy nekke boon from iren.
And if thou kanst nat tellen it anon,
Yet shal I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelfmonth and a day, to seche and leere
An answere suffisant in this mateere;
And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.'
Wo was this knyght and sorwefully he siketh,
But what! he may nat do al as hym liketh;
And at the laste he chees hym for to wende,

And come agayn right at the yeres ende
With swich answere as God wolde hym purveye;
And taketh his leve and wendeth forth his weye.
He seketh every hous and every place
Where-as he hopeth for to fynde grace,
To lerne what thyng wommen loven moost;
But he ne koude arryven in no coost
Wher-as he myghte fynde in this mateere
Two creatures accordynge in feere.
Somme seyde wommen loven best richesse,
Somme seyde honour, somme seyde jolynesse,
Somme riche array, somme seyden lust abedde
And ofte tyme to be wydwe and wedde.
Somme seyde that oure hertes been moost esed
Whan that we been yflatered and yplesed.
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal wynne us best with flaterye;
And with attendance and with bisynesse
Been we ylymed, bothe moore and lesse.
And somme seyen that we loven best
For to be free and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of oure vice,
But seye that we be wise and nothyng nyce;
For trewely ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,
That we nel kike for he seith us sooth.
Assay, and he shal fynde it that so dooth;
For be we never so vicious withinne,
We wol been holden wise and clene of synne.
And somme seyn that greet delit han we
For to been holden stable, and eke secree,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thyng that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;
Pardee, we wommen konne no thyng hele —
Witnesse on Myda, wol ye heere the tale.
Ovyde, amonges othere thynges smale,
Seyde Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growynge upon his heed, two asses eres;

The whiche vice he hydde as he best myghte,
Ful subtilly, from every mannes sighte,
That save his wyf, ther wiste of it namo.
He loved hire moost and trustede hire also;
He preyede hire that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure.
She swoor him nay, for al this world to wynne,
She nolde do that vileynye or synne
To make hir housbonde han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.
But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dȳde,
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so soore aboute hir herte
That nedely som word hire moste asterte.
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys faste by she ran —
Til she came there, her herte was a-fyre —
And as a bitore bombleth in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth unto the water doun,
'Biwreye me nat, thou water with thy soun!'
Quod she; 'to thee I telle it and namo.
Myn housbonde hath longe asses erys two!
Now is myn herte all hool; now is it oute;
I myghte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'
Heere may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot; we kan no conseil hyde.
The remenant of the tale if ye wol heere,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it leere.
This knyght of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he myghte nat come therby —
This is to seye, what wommen love moost —
Withinne his brest ful sorweful was the goost.
But hoom he gooth, he myghte nat sojourne;
The day was come that homward moste he tourne.
And in his wey it happed hym to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest syde,
Wher-as he saugh upon a daunce go
Of ladyes foure and twenty and yet mo;
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,

In hope that som wysdom sholde he lerne.
But certeinly, er he came fully there,
Vanysshed was this daunce, he nyste where.
No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf —
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agayn the knyght this olde wyf gan ryse,
And seyde, 'Sire knyght, heer forth ne lith no wey.
Tel me what that ye seken, by youre fey.
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
Thise olde folk kan muchel thyng,' quod she.
'My leeve mooder,' quod this knyght, 'certeyn,
I nam but deed but-if that I kan seyn
What thyng it is that wommen moost desire.
Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire.'
'Plight me thy trouthe, heere in myn hand,' quod she,
'The nexte thyng that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy myght;
And I wol telle it yow er it be nyght.'
'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knyght, 'I grante.'
'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel avante
Thy lyf is sauf; for I wol stonde therby,
Upon my lyf, the queene wol seye as I.
Lat se which is the proudeste of hem alle
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle
That dar seye "nay" of that I shal thee teche!
Lat us go forth, withouten lenger speche.'
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere,
And bad hym to be glad and have no fere.
Whan they be comen to the court, this knyght
Seyde he had holde his day as he hadde hight,
And redy was his answere, as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde
And many a wydwe, for that they been wise —
The queene hirself sittynge as justise —
Assembled been, his answere for to heere;
And afterward this knyght was bode appeere.
To every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knyght sholde telle in audience

What thyng that worldly wommen loven best.
This knyght ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his question anon answerde,
With manly voys, that al the court it herde:
'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
'Wommen desiren to have sovereynetee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie hym above.
This is youre mooste desir, thogh ye me kille;
Dooth as yow list, I am heer at youre wille.'
In al the court ne was ther wyf, ne mayde,
Ne wydwe, that contraried that he sayde,
But seyden he was worthy han his lyf.
And with that word, up stirte the olde wyf
Which that the knyght saugh sittynge in the grene.
'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady queene!
Er that youre court departe, do me right.
I taughte this answere unto the knyght;
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thyng that I wolde hym requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his myght.
Bifore the court thanne preye I thee, sir knyght,'
Quod she, 'that thou me take unto thy wyf;
For wel thou woost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey "nay," upon thy fey.'
This knyght answerde, 'Allas, and weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.
For Goddes love, as chees a newe requeste;
Taak al my good and lat my body go.'
'Nay, thanne,' quod she, 'I shrewe us bothe two!
For thogh that I be foul, and oold, and poore,
I nolde for al the metal, ne for oore
That under erthe is grave or lith above,
But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'
'My love?' quod he, 'nay, my dampnacion!
Allas, that any of my nacion
Sholde evere so foule disparaged be!'
But al for noght; thende is this, that he
Constreyned was, he nedes moste hire wedde;

And taketh his olde wyf and gooth to bedde.
Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That for my necligence I do no cure
To tellen yow the joye and al tharray
That at the feeste was that ilke day.
To which thyng shortly answeren I shal.
I seye ther nas no joye ne feeste at al.
Ther nas but hevynesse and muche sorwe;
For prively he wedded hire on a morwe,
And al day after hidde hym as an owle,
So wo was hym, his wyf looked so foule.
Greet was the wo the knyght hadde in his thoght
Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde ybroght;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylynge everemo,
And seyde, 'O deere housbonde, *benedicitee!*
Fareth every knyght thus with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of kyng Arthures hous?
Is every knyght of his so dangerous?
I am youre owene love, and youre wyf;
I am she which that saved hath youre lyf;
And certes, yet ne dide I yow nevere unright.
Why fare ye thus with me this firste nyght?
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tel it,
And it shal been amended, if I may.'
'Amended?' quod this knyght, 'allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended nevere mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so oold also,
And therto comen of so lough a kynde,
That litel wonder is thogh I walwe and wynde.
So wolde God myn herte wolde breste!'
'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of youre unreste?'
'Ye, certeinly,' quod he, 'no wonder is.'
'Now sire,' quod she, 'I koude amende al this,
If that me liste, er it were dayes thre,
So wel ye myghte bere yow unto me.
'But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse,

That therfore sholden ye be gentilmen —
Swich arrogancë is nat worth an hen.
Looke who that is moost vertuous alway,
Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he kan,
Taak hym for the grettest gentilman.
Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse;
For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
Yet may they nat biquethe for nothyng
To noon of us hir vertuous lyvyng,
That made hem gentilmen ycalled be,
And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.
'Wel kan the wise poete of Florence
That highte Dant speken in this sentence.
Lo, in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:
"Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man; for God, of his goodnesse,
Wole that of hym we clayme oure gentillesse;
For of oure eldres may we no thyng clayme
But temporel thyng that man may hurte and mayme."
'Eek every wight woot this as wel as I:
If gentillesse were planted natureelly
Unto a certeyn lynage doun the lyne,
Pryvee nor apert thanne wolde they nevere fyne
To doon of gentillesse the faire office;
They myghte do no vileynye or vice.
'Taak fyr and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne,
Yet wole the fyr as faire lye and brenne
As twenty thousand men myghte it biholde.
His office natureel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.
'Heere may ye se wel how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possession,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacion
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo, in his kynde.

For God it woot, men may wel often fynde
A lordes sone do shame and vileynye.
And he that wole han pris of his gentrye,
For he was boren of a gentil hous
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And nel hymselven do no gentil dedis
Ne folwen his gentil auncestre that deed is,
He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl;
For vileyns synful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nys but renomee
Of thyne auncestres for hire heigh bountee,
Which is a strange thyng to thy persone —
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone.
Thanne comth oure verray gentillesse of grace;
It was no thyng biquethe us with oure place.
'Thenketh hou noble, as seith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostillius,
That out of poverte roos to heigh noblesse.
Reedeth Senek, and redeth eek Boece.
Ther shul ye seen expresse that no drede is
That he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis.
And therfore, leeve housbonde, I thus conclude:
Al were it that myne auncestres weren rude,
Yet may the hye God — and so hope I —
Grante me grace to lyven vertuously.
Thanne am I gentil whan that I bigynne
To lyven vertuously and weyve synne.
'And theras ye of poverte me repreeve,
The hye God on whom that we bileeve
In wilful poverte chees to lyve his lyf.
And certes every man, mayden or wyf,
May understonde that Jesus, hevene kyng,
Ne wolde nat chesen vicious lyvyng.
"Glad poverte is an honeste thyng certeyn."
This wole Senec and othere clerkes seyn.
Whoso that halt hym payd of his poverte,
I holde hym riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
He that coveiteth is a pouere wight;
For he wolde han that is nat in his myght.

But he that noght hath, ne coveiteth have,
Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave.
'Vérray póverte, it syngeth proprely.
Juvenal seith of poverte myrily,
"The poure man, whan he goth by the weye
Bifore the theves, he may synge and pleye."
Poverte is hateful good, and as I gesse,
A ful greet bryngere out of bisynesse;
A greet amendere eek of sapience
To hym that taketh it in pacience.
Poverte is this, although it seme alenge:
Possession that no wight wol chalenge.
Poverte ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his God and eek hymself to knowe.
Poverte a spectacle is, as thynketh me,
Thurgh which he may hise verray freendes see.
And therfore, sire, syn that I noght yow greve,
Of my poverte namoore ye me repreve.
'Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me.
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an oold wight doon favour,
And clepe hym fader, for youre gentillesse.
And auctours shal I fynden as I gesse.
'Now ther ye seye that I am foul and old,
Than drede you noght to been a cokewold.
For filthe and eeldë, al so moot I thee,
Been grete wardeyns upon chastitee.
But nathelees, syn I knowe youre delit,
I shal fulfille youre worldly appetit.
'Chese now,' quod she, 'oon of thise thynges tweye:
To han me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe, humble wyf,
And nevere yow displese in al my lyf;
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take youre aventure of the repair
That shal be to youre hous bycause of me,
Or in som oother place, may wel be.
Now chese yourselven wheither that yow liketh.'

This knyght avyseth hym, and sore siketh.
But atte laste, he seyde in this manere:
'My lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
I put me in youre wise governance.
Cheseth youreself which may be moost plesance
And moost honour to yow and me also.
I do no fors the wheither of the two;
For as yow liketh it suffiseth me.'
'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrie,' quod she,
'Syn I may chese and governe as me lest.'
'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it best.'
'Kys me'! quod she; 'we be no lenger wrothe;
For by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe —
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to God that I moote sterven wood
But I to yow be al so good and trewe
As evere was wyf syn that the world was newe;
And but I be tomorn as fair to seene
As any lady, emperice or queene,
That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
Dooth with my lyf and deth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtyn; looke how that it is!'
And whan the knyght saugh verraily al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong therto,
For joye he hente hire in hise armes two,
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse.
A thousand tyme a-rewe he gan hire kisse;
And she obeyed hym in everythyng
That myghte doon hym plesance or likyng.
And thus they lyve unto hir lyves ende
In parfit joye. And Jesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, fressh a-bedde,
And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde!
And eek, I praye, Jesu shorte hir lyves
That nat wol be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nygardes of dispence,
God sende hem soone verray pestilence!

Heere endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

The prologe of the Freres Tale.

This worthy lymytour, this noble Frere,
He made alwey a maner louryng chiere
Upon the Somonour, but for honestee
No vileyns word as yet to hym spak he.
But atte laste he seyde unto the Wyf,
'Damé,' quod he, 'God yeve yow right good lyf!
Ye han heer touched, al so moot I thee,
In scole matere greet difficultee.
Ye han seyd muche thyng right wel, I seye;
But, dame, heere as we ryde by the weye,
Us nedeth nat to speken but of game,
And lete auctoritees, on Goddes name,
To prechyng and to scolë of clergye.
And if it lyke to this compaignye,
I wol yow of a somonour telle a game.
Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name
That of a somonour may no good be sayd.
I praye that noon of you be yvele apayd —
A somonour is a rennere up and doun
With mandementz for fornicacioun,
And is ybet at every townes ende.'
Oure Hoost tho spak: 'A, sire, ye sholde be hende
And curteys, as a man of youre estaat.
In compaignye we wol have no debaat.
Telleth youre tale, and lat the Somonour be.'
'Nay,' quod the Somonour, 'lat hym seye to me
What-so hym list. Whan it comth to my lot,
By God, I shal hym quiten every grot.
I shal hym tellen which a greet honour
It is to be a flaterynge lymytour;
And of many another manere cryme,
Which nedeth nat rehercen for this tyme;
And his office I shal hym telle, ywis.'
Oure Hoost answerde, 'Pees, namoore of this!'
And after this he seyde unto the Frere,
'Tel forth youre tale, leeve maister deere.'

Heere bigynneth the Freres Tale.

Whilom ther was dwellynge in my contree
An erchedekene, a man of heigh degree,
That boldely dide execucioun
In punysshynge of fornicacioun,
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bawderye,
Of diffamacioun, and avowtrye,
Of chirche reves, and of testamentz,
Of contractes, and eek lakke of sacramentz,
Of usure, and of symonye also;
But, certes, lecchours dide he grettest wo;
They sholde syngen, if that they were hent;
And smale tytheres weren foule yshent,
If any persone wolde upon hem pleyne.
Ther myghte asterte hym no pecunyal peyne.
For smale tithes and for smal offrynge
He made the peple pitously to synge;
For er the bisshope caughte hem with his hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book;
And thanne hadde he thurgh his jurisdiccion
Power to doon on hem correccion.
He hadde a somonour redy to his hond.
A slyer boye was noon in Engelond;
For subtilly he hadde his espiaille,
That taughtë hym whér hym myghtë availle.
He koude spare of lecchours oon or two,
To techen hym to foure and twenty mo.
For thogh this somonour wood was as an hare,
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare,
For we been out of his correccion;
They han of us no jurisdiccion,
Ne nevere shullen, terme of al hir lyves.
'Peter! so been wommen of the styves,'
Quod the Somonour, 'yput out of my cure.'
'Pees, with myschance, and with mysaventure!'
Thus seyde oure Hoost; 'and lat hym telle his tale
Now telleth forth, thogh that the somonour gale.
Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister deere!'

This false theef, this somonour — quod the Frere —
Hadde alwey bawdes redy to his hond
As any hauk to lure in Engelond,
That tolde hym al the secree that they knewe;
For hire acqueyntance was nat come of newe,
They weren hise approwours prively.
He took hymself a greet profit therby;
His maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
Withouten mandement a lewed man
He koude somne on peyne of Cristes curs.
And they were glade for to fille his purs
And make hym grete feestes atte nale.
And right as Judas hadde purses smale
And was a theef, right swich a theef was he;
His maister hadde but half his duëtee.
He was, if I shal yeven hym his laude,
A theef, and eek a somnour, and a baude.
He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
That wheither that sir Robert, or sir Huwe,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or whoso that it were
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere.
Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent;
And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,
And somne hem to the chapitre, bothe two,
And pile the man and lete the wenche go.
Thanne wolde he seye, 'Freend, I shal for thy sake
Do striken hire out of oure lettres blake.
Thee thar namoore, as in this cas, travaille;
I am thy freend ther I thee may availle.'
Certeyn, he knew of briberyes mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two;
For in this world nys dogge for the bowe
That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe
Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,
Or an avowtier, or a paramour.
And for that was the fruyt of al his rente,
Therfore on it he sette al his entente.
And so bifel that ones on a day
This somnour evere waityng on his pray,

Rood for to somne an old wydwe, a ribibe —
Feynynge a cause, for he wolde brybe —
And happed that he saugh bifore hym ryde
A gáy yemán, únder a forest syde.
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene;
He hadde upon a courtepy of grene;
An hat upon his heed, with frenges blake.
'Sire,' quod this somnour, 'hayl, and wel atake!'
'Welcome,' quod he, 'and every good felawe!
Wher rydestow under this grene-wode shawe?'
Seyde this yeman. 'Wiltow fer today?'
This somnour hym answerde, and seyde, 'Nay.
Heere faste by,' quod he, 'is myn entente,
To ryden for to reysen up a rente
That longeth to my lordes duëtee.'
'Artow thanne a bailly?' 'Ye,' quod he.
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
Seye that he was a somonour, for the name.
'*Depardieux*,' quod this yeman, 'deere broother;
Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
I am unknowen, as in this contree;
Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee,
And eek of bretherhede if that yow leste.
I havė gold and silver in my cheste;
If that thee happe to comen in oure shire,
Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desire.'
'*Grant mercy*,' quod this somonour, 'by my feith!'
Everych in ootheres hand his trouthe leith,
For to be sworen bretheren til they deye.
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.
This somonour, that was as ful of jangles
As ful of venym been thise waryangles,
And evere enqueryng upon everythyng,
'Brother,' quod he, 'where is now youre dwellyng,
Another day if that I sholde yow seche?'
This yeman hym answerde in softe speche;
'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north contree,
Where-as I hope somtyme I shal thee see.
Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse

That of myn hous ne shaltow nevere mysse.'
'Now brother,' quod this somonour, 'I yow preye,
Teche me, whil that we ryden by the weye —
Syn that ye been a baillif as am I —
Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully
In myn office how I may moost wynne;
And spareth nat for conscience ne synne,
But as my brother tel me how do ye.'
'Now by my trouthe, brother deere,' seyde he,
'As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale.
My wages been ful streitë and ful smale.
My lord is hard to me, and daungerous;
And myn officë is ful laborous;
And therfore by extorcions I lyve.
Forsothe, I take all that men wol me yeve.
Algate, by sleyghtë or by violence,
Fro yeer to yeer I wynne al my dispence.
I kan no bettre telle, feithfully.'
'Now certes,' quod this somonour, 'so fare I;
I spare nat to taken, God it woot,
But-if it be to hevy or to hoot.
What I may gete in conseil prively,
No maner conscience of that have I.
Nere myn extorcioun, I myghte nat lyven.
Nor of swiche japes wol I nat be shryven;
Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;
I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everychoon.
Wel be we met, by God and by Seint Jame!
But leeve brother, tel me thanne thy name,'
Quod this somonour, 'in this meene while.'
This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.
'Brother,' quod he, 'wiltow that I thee telle?
I am a feend; my dwellyng is in helle.
And heere I ryde aboute my purchasyng,
To wite wher men wolde me yeven anythyng.
My purchas is theffect of al my rente.
Looke how thou rydest for the same entente —
To wynne good, thou rekkest nevere how;
Right so fare I, for ryde I wolde right now

Unto the worldes ende for a preye.'
'A!' quod this sómonour, '*benedicite*, what sey ye?
I wende ye were a yeman, trewely;
Ye han a mannes shape as wel as I.
Han ye a figure thanne determinat
In helle, ther ye been in youre estat?'
'Nay, certeinly,' quod he; 'ther have we noon;
But whan us liketh we kan take us oon,
Or elles make yow seme we been shape.
Sómtyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape,
Or lyk an angel, kan I ryde or go.
It is no wonder thyng thogh it be so;
A lowsy jogelour kan deceyve thee,
And *pardee*, yet kan I moore craft than he.'
'Why,' quod the somonour, 'ryde ye thanne or goon
In sondry shape, and nat alwey in oon?'
'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swiche formes make
As moost able is oure preyes for to take.'
'What maketh yow to han al this labour?'
'Ful many a cause, leeve sire somonour,'
Seyde this feend. 'But alle thyng hath tyme;
The day is short, and it is passed pryme,
And yet ne wan I nothyng in this day.
I wol entende to wynnen if I may,
And nat entende oure wittes to declare;
For brother myn, thy wit is al to bare
To understonde, althogh I tolde hem thee.
But for thou axest why labouren we —
For somtyme we been Goddes instrumentz
And meenes, to doon hise comandementz,
Whan that hym list upon his creatures,
In divers art and in diverse figures.
Withouten hym we have no myght, certayn,
If that hym list to stonden ther agayn.
And somtyme, at oure prayere, han we leve
Oonly the body and nat the soule greve;
Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo.
And somtyme han we myght of bothe two —
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.

And somtyme be we suffred for to seke
Upon a man and doon his soule unreste
And nat his body. And al is for the beste.
Whan he withstandeth oure temptacioun,
It is a cause of his savacioun;
Al be it that it was nat oure entente
He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde hym hente.
And somtyme be we servant unto man;
As to the ercebisshope, Seint Dunstan,
And to the apostles servant eek was I.'
'Yet tel me,' quod the somonour, 'feithfully;
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway
Of elementz?' The feend answerde, 'Nay.
Somtyme we feyne; and somtyme we aryse
With dede bodyes in ful sondry wyse,
And speke as renably and faire and wel
As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel;
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he.
I do no fors of youre dyvynytee;
But o thyng warne I thee, I wol nat jape:
Thou wolt algates wite how we been shape?
Thou shalt herafterwardes, my brother deere,
Come there thee nedeth nat of me to leere;
For thou shalt, by thyn owene experience,
Konne in a chayer rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgile while he was on lyve,
Or Dant also. Now lat us ryde blyve,
For I wole holde compaignye with thee
Til it be so that thou forsake me.'
'Nay,' quod this somonour, 'that shal nat bityde.
I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;
My trouthe wol I holde, as in this cas;
For though thou were the devel Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother
As I am sworn — and ech of us til oother —
For to be trewe brother in this cas.
And bothe we goon abouten oure purchas.
Taak thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,
And I shal myn; thus may we bothe lyve.

And if that any of us have moore than oother,
Lat hym be trewe and parte it with his brother.'
'I graunte,' quod the devel, 'by my fey!'
And with that word, they ryden forth hir wey.
And right at the entryng of the townes ende,
To which this somonour shoope hym for to wende,
They saugh a cart that charged was with hey,
Which that a cartere droof forth in his wey.
Deepe was the wey; for which the carte stood.
The cartere smoot, and cryde as he were wood,
'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what, spare ye for the stones?
The feend,' quod he, 'yow fecche, body and bones!
As ferforthly as evere were ye foled,
So muche wo as I have with yow tholed,
The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!'
This somonour seyde, 'Heere shal we have a pley!'
And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne were,
Ful prively, and rowned in his ere:
'Herkne, my brother! herkne, by thy feith!
Herestow nat how that the cartere seith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee —
Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples thre.'
'Nay,' quod the devel; 'God woot, never a deel.
It is nat his entente, trust thou me weel.
Axe hym thyself, if thou nat trowest me;
Or elles stynt a while, and thou shalt see.'
This cartere thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they bigonne drawen and to stoupe.
'Heyt now!' quod he, 'ther Jesu Crist yow blesse,
And al his handwerk, bothe moore and lesse!
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!
I pray to God, save thee, and Seint Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, *pardee*.'
'Lo, brother,' quod the feend, 'what tolde I thee?
Heere may ye se, myn owene deere brother,
The carl spak oon thing, but he thoghte another.
Lat us go forth abouten oure viage;
Heere wynne I nothyng upon cariage.'
Whan that they coomen somwhat out of towne,

This somonour to his brother gan to rowne:
'Brother,' quod he, 'heere woneth an old rebekke,
That hadde almoost as lief to lese hire nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hir good.
I wole han twelf pens, though that she be wood,
Or I wol sompne hire unto oure office;
And yet, God woot, of hire knowe I no vice.
But for thou kanst nat as in this contree
Wynne thy cost, taak heer ensample of me.'
  This somonour clappeth at the wydwes gate.
'Com out,' quod he, 'thou olde virytrate!
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee.'
  'Who clappeth? seyde this wyf, '*benedícite!*
God save you, sire; what is youre sweete wille?'
  'I have,' quod he, 'of somoncè a bille.
Up peyne of cursyng, looke that thou be
Tomorn bifore the erchedeknes knee,
Tanswere to the court of certeyn thynges.'
  'Now, Lord,' quod she, 'Crist Jesu, kyng of kynges,
So wisly helpē me, as I ne may.
I have been syk, and that ful many a day.
I may nat go so fer,' quod she, 'ne ryde,
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.
May I nat axe a libel, sire somonour,
And answere there by my procuratour
To swich thyng as men wole opposen me?'
  'Yis,' quod this somonour; 'pay anon — lat se —
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite.
I shal no profit han therby but lite;
My maister hath the profit and nat I.
Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;
Yif me twelf pens; I may no lenger tarye.'
  'Twelf pens!' quod she, 'Now, lady Seinte Marie
So wisly help me out of care and synne,
This wyde world thogh that I sholde wynne,
Ne have I nat twelf pens withinne myn hoold.
Ye knowen wel that I am poure and oold;
Kithè youre almesse on me, poure wrecche.'
  'Nay thanne'; quod he, 'the foule feend me fecche

If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt!'
'Allas!' quod she; 'God woot, I have no gilt.'
'Pay me,' quod he, 'or by the sweete Seinte Anne,
As I wol bere awey thy newe panne
For dette which that thou owest me of old.
Whan that thou madest thyn housbonde cokewold,
I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.'
'Thou lixt!' quod she; 'by my savacioun,
Ne was I nevere er now, wydwe ne wyf,
Somoned unto youre court in al my lyf;
Ne nevere I nas but of my body trewe.
Unto the devel, blak and rough of hewe,
Yeve I thy body and my panne also!'
And whan the devel herde hire cursen so,
Upon hir knees, he seyde in this manere:
'Now, Mabely, myn owene moder deere,
Is this youre wyl in ernest that ye seye?'
'The devel,' quod she, 'so fecche hym er he deye,
And panne and al, but he wol hym repente!'
'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn entente,'
Quod this somonour, 'for to repente me
For anythyng that I have had of thee.
I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth.'
'Now, brother,' quod the devel, 'be nat wrooth.
Thy body and this panne been myne by right;
Thou shalt with me to helle yet tonyght,
Where thou shalt knowen of oure privetee
Moore than a maister of dyvynytee.'
And with that word this foule feend hym hente;
Body and soule he with the devel wente
Where-as that somonours han hir heritage.
And God, that makede after his ymage
Mankynde, save and gyde us alle and some,
And leve thise somonours goode men bicome!

'Lordynges, I koude han toold yow,' quod this Frere,
'Hadde I had leyser, for this Somnour heere,
After the text of Crist, and Poul, and John,
And of oure othere doctours many oon,

Swiche peynes that youre herte myghte agryse;
Al be it so no tonge may it devyse,
Thogh that I myghte a thousand wynter telle
The peynes of thilke cursed hous of helle.
But for to kepe us fro that cursed place
Waketh, and preyeth Jesu for his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour, Sathanas.
Herketh this word! beth war, as in this cas:
The leoun sit in his awayt alway
To sle the innocent if that he may.
Disposeth ay youre hertes to withstonde
The feend, that yow wolde make thral and bonde.
He may nat tempte yów over youre myght;
For Crist wol be youre champion and knyght.
And prayeth that thise somonours hem repente
Of hir mysdedes, er that the feend hem hente!'

Heere endeth the Freres Tale.

The prologe of the Somonours Tale.

This Somonour in his styropes hye stood;
Upon this Frere his herte was so wood
That lyk an aspen leef he quook for ire.
'Lordynges,' quod he, 'but o thyng I desire:
I yow biseke that of youre curteisye,
Syn ye han herd this false Frere lye,
As suffereth me I may my tale telle.
This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
And God it woot that it is litel wonder —
Freres and feendes been but lyte asonder.'

. . . . . .

Heere bigynneth the Somonour his Tale.

Lordynges, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,
A mersshy contree called Holdernesse,
In which ther wente a lymytour aboute,
To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doute.
And so bifel that on a day this frere

Hadde preched at a chirche in his manere,
And specially, aboven everythyng,
Excited he the peple in his prechyng
To trentals, and to yeve for Goddes sake
Wherwith men myghte hooly houses make,
Ther-as divine servyce is honoured,
Nat ther-as it is wasted and devoured;
Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yeve,
As to possessioners that mowen lyve,
Thanked be God, in wele and habundaunce.
'Trentals,' seyde he, 'deliveren fro penaunce
Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge;
Ye, whan that they been hastily ysonge,
Nat for to holde a preest joly and gay —
He syngeth nat but o masse in a day.
Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the soules!
Ful hard it is with flesshhook or with oules
To been yclawed, or to brenne or bake.
Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake!'
And whan this frere had seyd al his entente,
With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he wente.
Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem lest,
He went his wey — no lenger wolde he reste —
With scrippe and tipped staf, ytukked hye.
In every hous he gan to poure and prye;
And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles corn.
His felawe hadde a staf, tipped with horn,
A peyre of tables al of yvory,
And a poyntel polysshed fetisly;
And wroote the names, alwey as he stood,
Of alle folk that yaf hym any good,
Ascaunces that he wolde for hem prey.
'Yif us a busshel whete, malt, or reye;
A Goddes kechyl, or a trype of chese;
Or elles what yow lyst, we may nat cheese;
A Goddes halfpeny or a masse peny;
Or yif us of youre brawn, if ye have eny;
A dagon of youre blanket, leeve dame —
Oure suster deere, lo, heere I write youre name! —

Bacon, or beef, or swich thyng as ye fynde.'
A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihynde,
That was hir hostes man, and bar a sak;
And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his bak.
And whan that he was out at dore anon,
He planed awey the names everichon
That he biforn had writen in his tables.
He served hem with nyfles and with fables.
'Nay ther thou lixt, thou Somonour!' quod the Frere.
'Pees,' quod oure Hoost, 'for Cristes mooder deere!
Tel forth thy tale, and spare it nat at al.'
'So thryve I,' quod this Somonour, 'so I shal.'
So longe he wente, hous by hous, til he
Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be
Refresshed moore than in an hundred placis.
Syk lay the goode man whos that the place is;
Bedrede upon a couche lowe he lay.
'*Deus hic!*' quod he. 'O Thomas, freend, good day!'
Seyde this frere, curteisly and softe.
'Thomas,' quod he, 'God yelde yow, ful ofte
Have I upon this bench faren ful weel;
Heere have I eten many a myrie meel.'
And fro the bench he droof awey the cat,
And leyde adoun his potente, and his hat,
And eek his scrippe, and sette hym softe adoun.
His felawe was go walked into toun
Forth with his knave into that hostelrye
Where-as he shoope hym thilke nyght to lye.
'O deere maister,' quod this sike man,
'How han ye fare, sith that March bigan?
I saugh yow noght this fourtenyght or moore.'
'God woot,' quod he, 'laboured I have ful soore;
And specially for thy savacion
Have I seyd many a precious orison;
And for oure othere freendes, God hem blesse!
I have today been at youre chirche at messe,
And seyd a sermon — after my symple wit —
Nat al after the text of Hooly Writ;
For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,

And therfore wol I teche yow al the glose.
Glosynge is a glorious thyng, certeyn,
For lettre sleeth, so as thise clerkes seyn.
There have I taught hem to be charitable,
And spende hir good ther it is resonable.
And there I saugh oure dame; a, where is she?'
'Yond in the yerd, I trowe that she be,'
Seyde this man; 'and she wol come anon.'
'Ey, maister, welcome be ye, by Seint John!'
Seyde this wyf; 'how fare ye, hertely?'
The frere ariseth up ful curteisly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiste hire sweete, and chirteth as a sparwe
With his lyppes. 'Dame,' quod he, 'right weel;
As he that is youre servant every deel.
Thanked be God, that yow yaf soule and lyf,
Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf
In al the chirche, God so save me!'
'Ye; God amende defautes, sire,' quod she.
'Algates, welcome be ye, by my fey.'
'*Graunt mercy*, dame; this have I founde alwey.
But of youre grete goodnesse, by youre leve,
I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow greve,
I wole with Thomas speke a litel throwe.
Thise curatz been ful necligent and slowe
To grope tendrely a conscience
In shrift; in prechyng is my diligence,
And studie in Petres wordes and in Poules.
I walke, and fisshe Cristen mennes soules;
To yelden Jesu Crist his propre rente,
To sprede his word is set al myn entente.'
'Now, by youre leve, o deere sire,' quod she,
'Chideth him weel, for Seinte Trinitee.
He is as angry as a pissemyre,
Though that he have al that he kan desire;
Though I him wrye a-nyght and make hym warm,
And on hym leye my leg outher myn arm,
He groneth lyk oure boor lith in oure sty.
Oother desport ryght noon of hym have I;

I may nat plese hym in no maner cas.'
'O Thomas, *Je vous dy!* Thomas! Thomas! 1832
This maketh the feend. This moste ben amended.
Ire is a thyng that hye God defended.
And therof wol I speke a word or two.'
'Now maister,' quod the wyf, 'er that I go, 1836
What wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-aboute.'
'Now dame,' quod he, '*Je vous dy sanz doute*,
Have I nat of a capon but the lyvere;
And of youre softe breed nat but a shyvere; 1840
And after that a rosted pigges heed —
But that I nolde no beest for me were deed;
Thanne hadde I with yow hoomly suffisaunce.
I am a man of litel sustenaunce; 1844
My spirit hath his fostryng in the Bible.
The body is ay so redy and penyble
To wake that my stomak is destroyed —
I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed, 1848
Though I so freendly yow my conseil shewe;
By God, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe.'

. . . . . .

The rest of the tale of the Summoner is omitted because of its vulgarity.

Not true. T. runs to l. 2294 = 444 lines more; of which 1851-2139 (= 288 ll.) of unimpeachable propriety, while f[illegible] pleads with Thomas on subj. of anger & of liberal giving. Not very lively, but certainly not vulgar. Remaining 154 [illegible] are vulgar in part — & what is worse, a bit dull

2294 My tale is doon; we been almost at [illegible] [illegible] 4. D 847

[FRAGMENT IV (GROUP E)

THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK]

Heere folweth the Prologe of the Clerkes Tale of Oxenford.

'Sire Clerk of Oxenford,' oure Hooste sayde,
'Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde
Were newe spoused, sittynge at the bord.
This day ne herde I of youre tonge a word.
I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme;
But Salomon seith everythyng hath tyme;
For Goddes sake, as beth of bettre cheere!
It is no tyme for to studien heere.
Telle us som myrie tale, by youre fey!
For what man that is entred in a pley,
He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,
To make us for oure olde synnes wepe;
Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.
Telle us som murie thyng of aventures.
Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures —
Keepe hem in stoor til so be that ye endite
Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.
Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, we yow preye,
That we may understonde what ye seye.'
This worthy clerk benignely answerde.
'Hooste,' quod he, 'I am under youre yerde;
Ye han of us as now the governance,
And therfore wol I do yow obeisance
As fer as reson axeth hardily.
I wol yow telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padwe of a worthy clerk,

As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now deed and nayled in his cheste.
I prey to God so yeve his soule reste!
Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorik sweete
Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan dide of philosophie
Or lawe or oother art particuler.
But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer
But as it were a twynklyng of an eye,
Hem bothe hath slayn; and alle shul we dye.
But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,
I seye that first with heigh stile he enditeth,
Er he the body of his tale writeth,
A prohemye in the which discryveth he
Pemond, and of Saluces the contree,
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye
That been the boundes of West Lumbardye,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where-as the Poo out of a welle smal
Taketh his firste spryngyng and his sours;
That estward ay encresseth in his cours
To Emele ward, to Ferrare, and Venyse —
The which a long thyng were to devyse.
And trewely, as to my juggement,
Me thynketh it a thyng impertinent,
Save that he wole convoyen his mateere;
But this his tale, which that ye may heere.

Heere bigynneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

Ther is at the west syde of Ytaille,
Doun at the roote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne habundant of vitaille,
Where many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte;
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markys whilom lord was of that lond,
As were hise worthy eldres hym bifore;
And obeisant and redy to his hond
Were alle hise liges, bothe lasse and moore.
Thus in delit he lyveth, and hath doon yoore,
Biloved and drad thurgh favour of Fortune
Bothe of hise lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speke as of lynage,
The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye;
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour, and of curteisye;
Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye,
Save that in somme thynges that he was to blame;
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame hym thus, that he considereth noght
In tyme comynge what hym myghte bityde,
But in his lust present was al his thoght,
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde.
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde;
And eek he nolde — and that was worst of alle —
Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.

Oonly that point his peple bar so soore
That flokmeele on a day they to hym wente,
And oon of hem that wisest was of loore —
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
That he sholde telle hym what his peple mente,
Or elles koude he shewe wel swich mateere —
He to the markys seyde as ye shul heere.

'O noble markys, youre humanitee
Asseureth us to yeve us hardinesse,
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee,
That we to yow mowe telle oure hevynesse.
Accepteth, lord, now for youre gentillesse,
That we with pitous herte unto yow pleyne,
And lat youre eres nat my voys desdeyne.

'Al have I noght to doone in this mateere
Moore than another man hath in this place,
Yet forasmuche as ye, my lord so deere,
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
I dar the bettre aske of yow a space
Of audience to shewen oure requeste;
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

'For certes, lord, so wel us liketh yow
And al youre werk, and evere han doon, that we
Ne koude nat us-self devysen how
We myghte lyven in moore felicitee,
Save o thyng, lord, if youre wille be,
That for to been a wedded man yow leste;
Thanne were youre peple in sovereyn hertes reste.

'Boweth youre nekke under that blisful yok
Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse,
Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok,
And thenketh, lord, among youre thoghtes wyse
How that oure dayes passe in sondry wyse;
For thogh we slepe or wake or rome or ryde,
Ay fleeth the tyme; it nyl no man abyde.

'And thogh youre grene youthe floure as yit,
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon;
And deeth manaceth every age, and smyt
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon.
And al so certein as we knowe echoon
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle
Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle.

'Accepteth thanne of us the trewe entente,
That nevere yet refuseden thyn heeste,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wole assente,
Chese yow a wyf, in short tyme atte leeste,
Born of the gentilleste and of the meeste
Of al this land; so that it oghte seme
Honour to God and yow, as we kan deeme.

'Delivere us out of al this bisy drede
And taak a wyf, for hye Goddes sake;
For if it so bifelle — as God forbede! —
That thurgh youre deeth youre lyne sholde slake
And that a straunge successour sholde take
Youre heritage, O wo were us alyve!
Wherfore we pray you hastily to wyve.'

Hir meeke preyere and hir pitous cheere
Made the markys herte han pitee.
'Ye wol,' quod he, 'myn owene peple deere,
To that I nevere erst thoughte streyne me.
I me rejoysed of my liberte,
That seelde tyme is founde in mariage.
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

'But nathelees, I se youre trewe entente
And truste upon youre wit, and have doon ay.
Wherfore of my free wyl I wole assente
To wedde me as soone as evere I may.
But ther-as ye han profred me this day
To chese me a wyf, I yow relesse
That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse.

'For God it woot, that children ofte been
Unlyk hir worthy eldres hem bifore.
Bountee comth al of God, nat of the streen
Of which they been engendred and ybore.
I truste in Goddes bontee, and therfore
My mariage and myn estaat and reste
I hym bitake; he may doon as hym leste.

'Lat me allone in chesynge of my wyf;
That charge upon my bak I wole endure.
But I yow preye, and charge upon youre lyf,
What wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshipe hire, whil that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe heere and everywheere,
As she an emperoures doghter weere.

'And forthermoore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve;
For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At youre requeste, as evere moot I thryve,
Ther-as myn herte is set ther wol I wyve.
And but ye wole assente in this manere,
I prey yow speketh namoore of this matere.'

With hertely wyl they sworen and assenten
To al this thyng; ther seyde no wight nay,
Bisekynge hym of grace, er that they wenten,
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
Of his spousaille, as soone as evere he may.
For yet alwey the peple somwhat dredde
Lest that the markys no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunted hem a day swich as hym leste,
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly;
And seyde he dide al this at hir requeste.
And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
Knelynge up on hir knees ful reverently,
Hym thonken alle; and thus they han an ende
Of hire entente, and hoom agayn they wende.

And heer-upon he to hise officeres
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye;
And to hise privee knyghtes and squieres
Swich chargé yaf as hym liste on hem leye;
And they to his comandement obeye,
And ech of hem dooth al his diligence
To doon unto the feeste reverence.

Explicit prima pars. Incipit secunda pars.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honurable,
Ther-as this markys shoopé his mariage,
There stood a throope, of site delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir beestes and hir herbergage,
And of hire labour tooke hir sustenance,
After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise poure folk ther dwelte a man
Which that was holden pourest of hem alle;
But hye God somtyme senden kan
His grace into a litel oxe stalle;
Janicula men of that throope hym calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte;
And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous bountee,
Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne;
For poureliche yfostred up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne;
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank; and for she wolde vertu plese,
She knew wel labour, but noon ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hire virginitee
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage;
And in greet reverence and charitee
Hir olde, poure fader fostred shee.
A fewe sheepe, spynnynge on feeld, she kepte;
She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she homward cam, she wolde brynge
Wortes, or othere herbes, tymes ofte,
The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir lyvynge;
And made hir bed ful harde, and nothyng softe.
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on lofte
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this poure creature,
Ful ofte sithe this markys caste his eye,
As he on huntyng rood, paraventure;
And whan it fil that he myghte hire espye,
He noght with wantowne lookyng of folye
Hise eyen caste on hire, but in sad wyse
Upon hir chiere he gan hym ofte avyse,

Commendynge in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passynge any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chiere as dede;
For thogh the peple hadde no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
Wedde hire oonly, if evere he wedde sholde.

The day of weddyng cam, but no wight kan
Telle what womman that it sholde be;
For which merveille wondred many a man,
And seyden, whan that they were in privetee:
'Wol nat oure lord yet leve his vanytee?
Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas, the while!
Why wole he thus hymself and us bigile?'

But nathelees this markys hath doon make
Of gemmes set in gold and in asure
Brooches and rynges for Grisildis sake;
And of hir clothyng took he the mesure
By a mayde lyk to hire stature;
And eek of othere ornementes alle
That unto swich a weddyng sholde falle.

The time of undren of the same day
Approcheth that this weddyng sholde be;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee,
Ther maystow seen, of deyntevous vitaille
That may be founde as fer as last Ytaille.

This roial markys, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his compaignye —
The whiche that to the feeste weren yprayed —
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Unto the village of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde — of this, God woot, ful innocent,
That for hire shapen was al this array —
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And comth hoom, as soone as ever she may;
For wel she hadde herd seyd that thilke day
The markys sholde wedde; and if she myghte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte, 'I wole with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in oure dore, and se
The markysesse; and therfore wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me;
And thanne I may at leyser hire biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir thresshfold gon,
The markys cam, and gan hire for to calle.
And she set doun hir water pot anon,
Biside the thresshfold, in an oxes stalle;
And doun upon hir knes she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille,
Til she had herd what was the lordes will.

This thoghtful markys spak unto this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyde in this manere:
'Where is youre fader, O Grisildis?' he sayde.
And she with reverence, in humble cheere,
Answerde, 'Lord, he is al redy heere.'
And in she gooth, withouten lenger lette,
And to the markys she hir fader fette.

He by the hand thanne took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he hym hadde asyde:
'Janicula, I neither may ne kan
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.
If that thou vouche sauf, what-so bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf unto hir lyves ende.

THREE SCENES FROM THE GRISELDA STORY

From a cassone, or dower chest, painted by Fr. Pesellino. Now in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Italy. At the left are shown the Marquis and his train leaving the palace. Near the fountain in the center the Marquis sees Griselda, with her water jar. At the extreme right the ladies have stripped Griselda of her old clothing and are about to clothe her in the wedding garments provided by Walter.

'Thou lovest me, I woot it wel certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man ybore;
And all that liketh me, I dar wel seyn,
It liketh thee; and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyd bifore —
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe.'

This sodeyn cas this man astonyed so
That reed he wax; abayst, and al quakyng
He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But oonly thus, 'Lord,' quod he, 'my willynge
Is as ye wole; ne ayeynes youre likynge
I wol no thyng. Ye be my lord so deere;
Right as yow lust, governeth this mateere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markys softely,
'That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion; and wostow why?
For I wol axe if it hire wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hire after me.
And al this shal be doon in thy presence;
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whil they were aboute
Hir tretys, which-as ye shal after heere,
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honeste manere,
And tentifly, she kepte hir fader deere.
But outrely Grisildis wondre myghte,
For nevere erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place;
She nevere was to swiche gestes woned,
For which she looked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markys sayde
To this benigne, verray, feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde 'ye shal wel understonde
It liketh youre fader and to me
That I yow wedde; and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose ye wol that it so be.
But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
'That sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse?

'I seye this: be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thynketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And nevere ye to grucche it, nyght ne day?
And eek whan I sey "ye," ne sey nat "nay,"
Neither by word ne frownyng contenance?
Swere this, and heere I swere yow alliance.'

Wondrynge upon this word, quakynge for drede,
She seyde, 'Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede;
But as ye wole youreself, right so wol I;
And heere I swere that nevere willyngly,
In werk ne thoght, I nyl yow disobeye,
For to be deed — though me were looth to deye.'

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he.
And forth he gooth, with a ful sobre cheere,
Out at the dore; and after that cam she.
And to the peple he seyde in this manere:
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth heere.
Honoureth hire and loveth hire, I preye,
Whoso me loveth. Ther is namoore to seye.'

And for that nothyng of hir olde geere
She sholde brynge into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right theere;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes, wherinne she was clad.
But nathelees, this mayde bright of hewe,
Fro foot to heed, they clothed han al newe.

Hir heris han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fyngres smale
A corōne on hire heed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of nowches, grete and smale.
Of hire array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hire knew, for hire fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markys hath hire spoused with a ryng
Broght for the same cause; and thanne hire sette
Upon an hors, snow whit and wel amblyng;
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With joyful peple that hire ladde and mette,
Convoyed hire. And thus the day they spende
In revel til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markysesse
God hath swich favour sent hire of his grace
That it ne semed nat by liklynesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote, or in an oxe stalle,
But norissed in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so deere
And worshipful that folk ther she was bore,
And from hire birthe knewe hire yeer by yeere,
Unnethe trowed they — but dorste han swore —
That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter were; for as by conjecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For though that evere vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And koude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hire lovede that looked on hir face.

Noght oonly of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the beautee of hir name,
But eek biside, in many a regioun,
If oon seide wel, another seyde the same.
So spradde of hire heighe bountee the name
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Goon to Saluce upon hire to bihold.

Thus Walter — lowely? nay, but roially —
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In Goddes pees lyveth ful esily
At hoom; and outward, grace ynogh had he;
And for he saugh that under lowe degree
Was vertu hid, the peple hym heelde
A prudent man; and that is seyn ful seelde.

Nat oonly this Grisildis, thurgh hir wit,
Koude al the feet of wyfly humblenesse,
But eek whan that the cas required it,
The commune profit koude she redresse.
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse
In al that land that she ne koude apese,
And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese.

Though that hire housbonde absent were anon,
If gentilmen, or othere of hire contree,
Were wrothe, she wolde bryngen hem aton;
So wise and rype wordes hadde she,
And juggementz of so greet equitee,
That she from hevene sent was, as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a doghter hath ybore,
Al had hire levere have born a knave child.
Glad was this markys and the folk therfore;
For though a mayde child coome al bifore,
She may unto a knave child atteyne,
By liklihede, syn she nys nat bareyne.

Explicit secunda pars. Incipit tercia pars.

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,
Whan that this child had souked but a throwe,
This markys in his herte longeth so
To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne myghte out of his herte throwe
This merveillous desir his wyf tassaye;
Nedelees, God woot, he thoghte hire for taffraye.

He hadde assayed hire ynogh bifore,
And foond hire evere good. What neded it
Hire for to tempte, and alwey moore and moore?
Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,
But as for me I seye that yvele it sit
To assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in angwyssh and in drede.

For which this markys wroghte in this manere:
He cam allone, a-nyght ther-as she lay,
With stierne face, and with ful trouble cheere,
And seyde thus, 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'that day
That I yow took out of youre pouere array
And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse —
Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse?

'I seye, Grisilde, this present dignitee
In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be
That I yow took in poure estaat ful lowe,
For any wele ye moot youreselven knowe? —
Taak heede of every word that I yow seye;
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye.

Ye woot youreself wel how that ye cam heere
Into this hous, it is nat longe ago;
And though to me that ye be lief and deere,
Unto my gentils ye be nothyng so.
They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo
For to be subgetz and been in servage
To thee, that born art of a smal village.

'And namely sith thy doghter was ybore,
Thise wordes han they spoken, doutelees.
But I desire, as I have doon bifore,
To lyve my lyf with hem in reste and pees.
I may nat in this caas be recchelees;
I moot doon with thy doghter for the beste —
Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.

'And yet, God woot, this is ful looth to me;
But nathelees, withoute youre wityng
I wol nat doon; but this wol I,' quod he,
'That ye to me assente, as in this thyng.
Shewe now youre pacience in youre werkyng,
That ye me highte and swore in youre village
That day that maked was oure mariage.'

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved,
Neither in word, or chiere, or countenance,
For as it semed, she was nat agreved.
She seyde, 'Lord, al lyth in youre plesance;
My child and I, with hertely obeisance,
Been youres al; and ye mowe save and spille
Youre owene thyng; werketh after youre wille.

'Ther may nothyng, God so my soule save,
Liken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I ne desire nothyng for to have,
Ne drede for to leese, save oonly thee.
This wyl is in myn herte, and ay shal be;
No lengthe of tyme, or deeth, may this deface,
Ne chaunge my corage to another place.'

Glad was this markys of hire answeryng,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his cheere and his lookyng
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
Soone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath toold al his entente,
Unto a man, and to his wyf hym sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thynges grete; and eek swich folk wel kan
Doon execucion on thynges badde.
The lord knew wel that he hym loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste the lordes wille,
Into the chambre he stalked hym ful stille.

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye moote foryeve it me
Though I do thyng to which I am constreyned.
Ye been so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes heestes mowe nat been yfeyned;
They mowe wel been biwailled and compleyned,
But men moote nede unto hire lust obeye;
And so wol I, ther is namoore to seye.

'This child I am comanded for to take —'
And spak namoore; but out the child he hente,
Despitously, and gan a cheere make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
Grisildis moot al suffren and consente,
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this crueel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this man;
Suspect his face; suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas, hir doghter that she loved so!
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
But nathelees, she neither weepe ne syked,
Consentynge hire to that the markys lyked.

But atte laste, to speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentilman,
That she moste kisse hire child, er that it deyde.
And in hir barm this litel child she leyde,
With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse;
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

And thus she seyde, in hire benigne voys:
'Fareweel my child! I shal thee nevere see;
But sith I thee have marked with the croys
Of thilke Fader — blessed mooté he be! —
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree,
Thy soule, litel child, I hym bitake,
For this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice in this cas
It had been hard this reuthe for to se.
Wel myghte a mooder, thanne, han cryd 'allas!'
But nathelees, so sad stidefast was she
That she endured al adversitee,
And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
'Have heer agayn youre litel yonge mayde.

'Gooth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heeste;
And o thyng wol I prey yow of youre grace,
That, but my lord forbad yow, atte leeste,
Burieth this litel body in som place
That beestes ne no briddes it to-race.'
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
But took the child and wente upon his weye.

This sergeant cam unto his lord ageyn,
And of Grisildis wordes and hire cheere
He tolde hym, point for point, in short and pleyn;
And hym presenteth with his doghter deere.
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,
But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille —
As lordes doon whan they wol han hir wille —

And bad his sergeant that he pryvely
Sholde this child ful softe wynde and wrappe,
With alle circumstances, tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But upon peyne his heed of for to swappe,
That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
Ne whennè he cam, ne whider that he wente.

But at Boloignè to his suster deere,
That thilke tyme of Pavik was countesse,
He sholde it take, and shewe hire this mateere,
Bisekynge hire to doon hire bisynesse
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse;
And whos child that it was, he bad hym hyde
From every wight, for oght that may bityde.

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thyng,
But to this markys now retourne we;
For now gooth he ful faste ymaginyng
If by his wyves cheere he myghte se,
Or by hire word aperceyvè, that she
Were chaunged; but he nevere hire koude fynde
But evere in oon ylike sad and kynde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
And eek in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to hym in every maner wyse;
Nē of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
Noon accident for noon adversitee
Was seyn in hire, ne nevere hir doghter name
Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

In this estaat ther passed been foure yeer
Er she with childe was; but as God wolde,
A knave child she bar by this Walter,
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
Nat oonly he, but al his contree merye,
Was for this child, and God they thanke and herye.

Whan it was two yeer old and fro the brest
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markys caughte yet another lest
To tempte his wyf yet ofter if he may.
O, nedelees was she tempted in assay!
But wedded men ne knowe no mesure
Whan that they fynde a pacient creature!

'Wyf,' quod this markys, 'ye han herd er this
My peple sikly berth oure mariage;
And namely, sith my sone yboren is,
Now is it worse than evere in al oure age;
The murmure sleeth myn herte and my corage,
For to myne eres comth the voys so smerte
That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.

'Now sey they thus: "Whan Walter is agon,
Thanne shal the blood of Janicle succede,
And been oure lord, for oother have we noon."
Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of drede.
Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken heede;
For certeinly I drede swich sentence,
Though they nat pleyn speke in myn audience.

'I wolde lyve in pees, if that I myghte.
Wherfore I am disposed outrely,
As I his suster servede by nyghte,
Right so thenke I to serve hym pryvely.
This warne I yow that ye nat sodeynly
Out of youreself for no wo sholde outreye.
Beth pacient; and therof I yow preye!'

'I have,' quod she, 'seyd thus, and evere shal:
I wol nothyng, ne nyl nothyng, certayn,
But as yow list. Naught greveth me at al
Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn
At youre comandement; this is to sayn,
I have noght had no part of children tweyne
But first siknesse and after wo and peyne.

'Ye been oure lord; dooth with youre owene thyng
Right as yow list. Axeth no reed at me;
For as I lefte at hoom al my clothyng,
Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod she,
'Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee,
And took youre clothyng. Wherfore I yow preye,
Dooth youre plesance; I wol youre lust obeye.

'And certes if I hadde prescience
Youre wyl to knowe, er ye youre lust me tolde,
I wolde it doon withouten necligence;
But now I woot youre lust, and what ye wolde,
Al youre plesance ferme and stable I holde;
For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,
Right gladly wolde I dyen yow to plese —

'Deth may noght make no comparisoun
Unto youre love.' And whan this markys say
The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun
Hise eyen two, and wondreth that she may
In pacience suffre al this array.
And forth he goth with drery contenance,
But to his herte it was ful greet plesance.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
That he hire doghter caughte, right so he —
Or worse, if men worse kan devyse —
Hath hent hire sone that ful was of beautee.
And evere in oon so pacient was she
That she no chiere maade of hevynesse,
But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse;

Save this: She preydé hym that if he myghte,
Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,
His tendre lymes, delicaat to sighte,
Fro foweles and fro beestes for to save.
But she noon answere of hym myghte have;
He wente his wey as hym nothyng ne roghte;
But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

This markys wondred, evere lenger the moore,
Upon hir pacience; and if that he
Ne hadde soothly knowen ther bifoore
That parfitly hir children loved she,
He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
And of malice, or for crueel corage,
That she hadde suffred this with sad visage,

But wel he knew that, next hymself certayn,
She loved hir children best in every wyse.
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn
If thise assayes myghte nat suffise.
What koude a sturdy housbonde moore devyse
To preeve hire wyfhod or hir stedefastnesse,
And he continuynge evere in sturdinesse?

But ther been folk of swich condicion
That whan they have a certein purpos take,
They kan nat stynte of hire entencion,
But right as they were bounden to that stake,
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markys fulliche hath purposed
To tempte his wyf as he was first disposed.

He waiteth if by word or contenance
That she to hym was changed of corage;
But nevere koude he fynde variance.
She was ay oon in herte and in visage;
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The moore trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to hym in love, and moore penyble.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther nas but o wyl; for as Walter leste,
The same lust was hire plesance also.
And God be thanked, al fil for the beste!
She shewed wel for no worldly unreste
A wyf as of hirself nothing ne sholde
Wille in effect but as hir housbonde wolde.

The sclaundre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,
That of a crueel herte he wikkedly —
For he a poure womman wedded hadde —
Hath mordred bothe his children prively.
Swich murmure was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which where-as his peple ther bifore
Hadde loved hym wel, the sclaundre of his diffame
Made hem that they hym hatede therfore.
To been a mordrere is an hateful name;
But nathelees, for ernest ne for game,
He of his crueel purpos nolde stente;
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse
Enformed of his wyl, sente his message,
Comaundynge hem swiche bulles to devyse
As to his crueel purpos may suffyse —
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad hym to wedde another if hym leste.

I seye he bad they sholde countrefete
The popes bulles, makynge mencion
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,
As by the popes dispensacion,
To stynte rancour and dissencion
Bitwixe his peple and hym; thus seyde the bulle,
The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it hadde be right so.
But whan thise tidynges cam to Grisildis,
I deeme that hire herte was ful wo;
But she, ylike sad for everemo,
Disposed was — this humble creature —
The adversitee of Fortune al tendure,

Abidynge evere his lust and his plesance
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,
As to hire verray worldly suffisance.
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal,
This markys writen hath in special
A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,
And secreely he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Pavyk, which that hadde tho
Wedded his suster, preyde he specially
To bryngen hoom agayn hise children two,
In honurable estaat, al openly.
But o thyng he hym preyde outrely —
That he to no wight, though men wolde enquere,
Sholde nat telle whos children that they were,

But seye the mayden sholde ywedded be
Unto the markys of Saluce anon.
And as this erl was preyed so dide he;
For at day set he on his wey is goon
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde,
Hir yonge brother ridynge hire bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This fresshe mayde ful of gemmes cleere; aet. 11-12
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age,
Arrayed eek ful fressh in his manere.
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad cheere,
Toward Saluces shapynge hir journey
Fro day to day, they ryden in hir wey.

Explicit quarta pars. Sequitur pars quinta.

Among al this, after his wikke usage,
This markys — yet his wyf to tempte moore
To the outtreste preeve of hir corage,
Fully to han experience and loore
If that she were as stidefast as bifoore —
He on a day, in open audience,
Ful boistously hath seyd hire this sentence:

'Certes, Grisilde, I hadde ynogh plesance
To han yow to my wyf for youre goodnesse,
As for youre trouthe and for youre obeisance,
Noght for youre lynage ne for youre richesse;
But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse
That in greet lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
Ther is greet servitute, in sondry wyse.

'I may nat doon as every plowman may.
My peple me constreyneth for to take
Another wyf; and crien day by day;
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake.
And treweliche, thus muche I wol yow seye —
My newe wyf is comynge by the weye.

'Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place.
And thilke dowere that ye broghten me,
Taak it agayn; I graunte it of my grace.
Retourneth to youre fadres hous,' quod he.
'No man may alwey han prosperitee.
With evene herte I rede yow tendure
This strook of fortune or of aventure.'

And she answerde agayn in pacience.
'My lord,' quod she 'I woot, and wiste alway,
How that bitwixen youre magnificence
And my poverte no wight kan ne may
Maken comparison, it is no nay.
I ne heeld me nevere digne in no manere
To be youre wyf — no, ne youre chamberere.

'And in this hous, ther ye me lady maade —
The heighe God take I for my witnesse,
And also wysly he my soule glaade! —
I nevere heeld me lady, ne maistresse,
But humble servant to youre worthynesse;
And evere shal, whil that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.

'That ye so longe, of youre benignitee,
Han holden me in honour and nobleye —
Where-as I was noght worthy for to bee —
That thonke I God, and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde it yow; ther is namoore to seye.
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with hym dwelle unto my lyves ende.

'Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed my lyf ther wol I lede,
A wydwe clene in body, herte, and al;
For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am youre trewe wyf, it is no drede —
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make!

'And of youre newe wyf God of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee,
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to bee;
For sith it liketh yow, my lord,' quod shee,
'That whilom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol goon whan yow leste.

'But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my mynde
It were my wrecched clothes, nothyng faire;
The whiche to me were hard now for to fynde.
O goode God, how gentil and how kynde
Ye semed by youre speche and youre visage
The day that maked was oure mariage!

'But sooth is seyd — algate I fynde it trewe,
For in effect it preeved is on me —
Love is noght oold as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee —
To dyen in the cas — it shal nat bee
That evere in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

'My lord, ye woot that in my fadres place
Ye dide me streepe out of my poure weede,
And richely me cladden, of youre grace;
To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede,
But feith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede;
And heere agayn your clothyng I restoore
And eek your weddyng ryng for everemore.

'The remenant of youre jueles redy be
In-with youre chambre, dar I saufly sayn.
Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she,
'I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.
Al youre plesance wol I folwen fayn;
But yet I hope it be nat youre entente
That I smoklees out of youre paleys wente.

'Ye koude nat doon so dishoneste a thyng,
That thilke wombe in which youre children leye
Sholde biforn the peple in my walkyng
Be seyn al bare; wherfore I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye.
Remembre yow, myn owene lord so deere,
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere.

'Wherfore, in gerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth sauf to yeve me to my meede
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was youre wyf. And heer take I my leeve
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.'

'The smok,' quod he, 'that thou hast on thy bak,
Lat it be stille, and bere it forth with thee.'
But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
But wente his wey, for routhe and for pitee.
Biforn the folk hirselven strepeth she,
And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,
Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

The folk hire folwe, wepynge in hir weye;
And fortune ay they cursen, as they goon.
But she fro wepyng kepte hire eyen dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
Hir fader, that this tidynge herde anoon,
Curseth the day and tyme that nature
Shoope hym to been a lyves creature.

For out of doute this olde poure man
Was evere in suspect of hir mariage;
For evere he demed, sith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,
Hym wolde thynke it were a disparage
To his estaat so lowe for talighte,
And voyden hire as soone as ever he myghte.

Agayns his doghter hastiliche goth he,
For he by noyse of folk knew hire comynge;
And with hire olde coote, as it myghte be,
He cŏvered hire, ful sorwefully wepynge;
But on hire body myghte she it nat brynge,
For rudè was the clooth and moore of age
By dayes fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader for a certeyn space
Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,
That neither by hire wordes ne hire face,
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hire absence,
Ne shewed she that hire was doon offence;
Ne of hire heighe estaat no remembrance
Ne hadde she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is; for in hire grete estaat
Hire goost was evere in pleyn humylitee:
No tendre mouth, noon herte delicaat,
No pompe, no semblant of roialtee,
But ful of pacient benyngnytee,
Discreet and pridelees, ay honurable,
And to hire housbonde evere meke and stable.

Men speke of Job, and moost for his humblesse,
As clerkes whan hem list konne wel endite —
Namely of men — but as in soothfastnesse,
Though clerkes preise wommen but a lite,
Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquite
As womman kan, ne kan been half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

Explicit quinta pars. Sequitur pars sexta.

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Pavyk come,
Of which the fame up sprang to moore and lesse.
And in the peples eres, alle and some,
Was kouth eek that a newe markysesse
He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and richesse
That nevere was ther seyn with mannes eye
So noble array in al West Lumbardye.

The markys, which that shoope and knew al this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his message
For thilke sely, poure Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Nat with no swollen thoght in hire corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hire knees hire sette,
And reverently and wisely she hym grette.

'Grisilde,' quod he, 'my wyl is outrely
This mayden that shal wedded been to me
Received be tomorwe as roially
As it possible is in myn hous to be,
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estaat in sittyng and servyse
And heigh plesance as I kan best devyse.

'I have no wommen suffisant, certayn,
The chambres for tarraye in ordinance
After my lust, and therfore wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich manere governance.
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesance;
Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
Do thou thy devoir, at the leeste weye.'

'Nat oonly, lord, that I am glad,' quod she,
'To doon youre lust, but I desire also
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree,
Withouten feyntyng, and shal everemo;
Ne nevere, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne shal the goost withinne myn herte stente
To love yow best with al my trewe entente.'

And with that word, she gan the hous to dighte,
And tables for to sette, and beddes make;
And peyned hire to doon al that she myghte;
Preyynge the chambreres, for Goddes sake,
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake.
And she, the mooste servysable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.

Abouten undren gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise noble children tweye;
For which the peple ran to seen the sighte
Of hire array, so richely biseye.
And thanne at erst amonges hem they seye
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leste
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste

For she is fairer, as they deemen alle,
Than is Grisilde, and moore tendre of age;
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem sholde falle,
And moore plesant for hire heigh lynage.
Hir brother eek so faire was of visage
That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesance,
Commendynge now the markys governance.

'O stormy peple! unsad, and evere untrewe!
Ay undiscreet and chaungynge as a vane;
Delitynge evere in rumbul that is newe,
For lyk the moone ay wexe ye and wane;
Ay ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane!
Youre doom is fals; youre constance yvele preeveth;
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth.'

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gazed up and doun
For they were glad right for the noveltee
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
Namoore of this make I now mencioun,
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir bisynesse.

Ful bisy was Grisilde in everythyng
That to the feeste was apertinent.
Right noght was she abayst of hire clothyng,
Thogh it were rude and somdeel eek to-rent;
But with glad cheere to the yate is went,
With oother folk, to greete the markysesse,
And after that dooth forth hire bisynesse.

With so glad chiere hise gestes she receyveth,
And konnyngly, everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man aperceyveth,
But ay they wondren what she myghte bee
That in so poure array was for to see,
And koude swich honour and reverence;
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In al this meenewhile she ne stente
This mayde and eek hir brother to commende,
With al hir herte, in ful benyngne entente,
So wel that no man koude hir pris amende.
But atte laste whan that thise lordes wende
To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

'Grisilde,' quod he — as it were in his pley —
'How liketh thee my wyf and hire beautee?'
'Right wel,' quod she, 'my lord; for in good fey
A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she.
I prey to God yeve hire prosperitee;
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance ynogh unto youre lyves ende.

'O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge
This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;
For she is fostred in hire norissynge
Moore tendrely, and to my supposynge
She koude nat adversitee endure
As koude a poure fostred creature.'

And whan this Walter saugh hire pacience,
Hir glade chiere and no malice at al —
And he so ofte had doon to hire offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuynge evere hire innocence overal —
This sturdy markys gan his herte dresse
To rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse.

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he.
'Be now namoore agast ne yvele apayed.
I have thy feith and thy benyngnytee,
As wel as evere womman was, assayed;
In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed,
Now knowe I, goode wyf, thy stedfastnesse.'
And hire in armes took, and gan hire kesse.

And she, for wonder, took of it no keepe;
She herde nat what thyng he to hire seyde.
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleepe,
Til she out of hire mazednesse abreyde.
'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by God, that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf; ne noon oother I have,
Ne nevere hadde, as God my soule save!

'This is thy doghter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf; that oother, feithfully,
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed.
Thou bare hym in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept hem privily.
Taak hem agayn; for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye.

'And folk that ootherweys han seyd of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this deede
For no malice, ne for no crueltee,
But for tassaye in thee thy wommanheede,
And nat to sleen my children — God forbeede! —
But for to kepe hem pryvely and stille
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswownê doun she falleth
For pitous joye; and after hire swownynge
She bothe hire yonge children unto hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously wepynge,
Embraceth hem; and tendrely kissynge,
Ful lyk a mooder, with hire salte teeres
She bathed bothe hire visage and hire heeres.

O, which a pitous thyng it was to se
Hir swownyng, and hire humble voys to heere!
'*Graunt mercy*, lord! that thanke I yow,' quod she,
'That ye han saved me my children deere.
Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere.
Sith I stonde in youre love and in youre grace,
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace.

'O tendre, O deere, O yonge children myne,
Youre woful mooder wende stedfastly
That crueel houndes or som foul vermyne
Hadde eten yow; but God, of his mercy,
And youre benyngne fader tendrely
Hath doon yow kept.' And in that same stounde
Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde.

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she
Hire children two, whan she gan hem tembrace,
That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
The children from hire arm they gonne arace.
O many a teere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that stooden hire bisyde;
Unnethe abouten hire myghte they abyde.

Walter hire gladeth and hire sorwe slaketh.
She riseth up abaysed from hire trance;
And every wight hire joye and feeste maketh
Til she hath caught agayn hire contenance.
Walter hire dooth so feithfully plesance
That it was deyntee for to seen the cheere
Bitwixe hem two, now they been met yfeere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
Han taken hire and into chambre gon;
And strepen hire out of hire rude array,
And in a clooth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Upon hire heed, they into halle hire broghte;
And ther she was honured as hire oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
For every man and womman dooth his myght
This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres lyght;
For moore solempne in every mannes syght
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Lyven thise two in concord and in reste;
And richely his doghter maryed he
Unto a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Ytaille; and thanne in pees and reste
His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage
In reste and pees, after his fader day;
And fortunat was eek in mariage,
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath been of olde tymes yoore.
And herkneth what this auctour seith therfoore:

'This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
'Folwen Grisilde, as in humylitee;
'For it were inportable, though they wolde;
'But for that every wight, in his degree,
'Sholde be constant in adversitee,
'As was Grisilde.' Therfore Petrak writeth
This storie, which with heigh stile he enditeth.

'For sith a womman was so pacient
'Unto a mortal man, wel moore us oghte
'Receyven al in gree that God us sent;
'For greet skile is he preeve that he wroghte,
'But "he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,"
'As seith Seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede;
'He preeveth folk al day, it is no drede,

'And suffreth us, as for oure excercise,
'With sharpe scourges of adversitee
'Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise;
'Nat for to know oure wyl — for certes he,
'Er we were born, knew oure freletee.
'And for oure beste is al his governance;
'Lat us thanne lyve in vertuous suffrance.'

But o word, lordynges, herkneth er I go:
It were ful hard to fynde nowadayes
In al a toun Grisildis thre or two;
For if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras that, thogh the coyne be fair at eye,
It wolde rather breste atwo than plye.

For which heere, for the Wyves love of Bathe —
Whos lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
In heigh maistrie, and elles were it scathe! —
I wol with lusty herte, fressh and grene,
Seyn yow a song, to glade yow, I wene,
And lat us stynte of ernestful matere;
Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere:

Lenvoy de Chaucer

Grisilde is deed; and eek hire pacience;
And bothe atones buryed in Ytaille!
For which I crie in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be tassaille
His wyves pacience in hope to fynde
Grisildis, for in certein he shal faille.

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
Lat noon humylitee youre tonge naille;
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of yow a storie of swich mervaille
As of Grisildis, pacient and kynde,
Lest Chichivache yow swelwe in hire entraille!

Folweth Ekko! that holdeth no silence,
But evere answereth at the countretaille.
Beth nat bidaffed for youre innocence,
But sharply taak on yow the governaille.
Emprenteth wel this lesson in youre mynde,
For commune profit sith it may availle.

Ye archiwyves, stondeth at defense!
Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille,
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense.
And sklendre wyves, fieble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Ynde!
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille;

Ne dreed hem nat; doth hem no reverence;
For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest and eek his aventaille.
In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde,
And thou shalt make hym couche as doth a quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk been in presence
Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparaille;
If thou be foul, be fre of thy dispence —
To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaille.
Be ay of chiere as light as leef on lynde,
And lat hym care, and wepe, and wryng, and waille!

Bihoold the murye wordes of the Hoost.

This worthy clerk whan ended was his tale,
Oure Hooste seyde, and swoor, 'By Goddes bones,
'Me were levere than a barel ale,
My wyf at hoom had herd this legende ones!

This is a gentil tale for the nones,
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;
But thyng that wol nat be, lat it be stille.' 1219*

Heere endeth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

The prologe of the Marchantes Tale.

'Wepyng and waylyng, care and oother sorwe,
I knowe ynogh, on even and a-morwe,'
Quod the Marchant, 'and so doon othere mo
That wedded been. I trowe that it be so; 1216
For wel I woot it fareth so with me.
I have a wyf, the worste that may be;
For thogh the feend to hire ycoupled were,
She wolde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere. 1220
What sholde I yow reherce in special
Hir hye malice? She is a shrewe at al.
Ther is a long and large difference
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience 1224
And of my wyf the passyng crueltee.
Were I unbounden, al so moot I thee,
I wolde nevere eft comen in the snare.
We wedded men lyve in sorwe and care. 1228
Assaye whoso wole, and he shal fynde
I seye sooth, by Seint Thomas of Ynde —
As for the moore part, I sey nat alle;
God shilde that it sholde so bifalle. 1232
'A, good sire Hoost, I have ywedded bee
Thise monthes two, and moore nat, *pardee;*
And yet, I trowë, he that al his lyve
Wyflees hath been, though that men wolde him ryve 1236
Unto the herte, ne koude in no manere
Tellen so muchel sorwe as I, now, heere,
Koude tellen of my wyves cursednesse.'
'Now,' quod our Hooste, 'Marchant, so God yow blesse! 1240
Syn ye so muchel knowen of that art,
Ful hertely I pray yow, telle us part.'
'Gladly,' quod he, 'but of myn owene soore,
For soory herte I telle may namoore. 1244

[The Merchant's End-Link.]

[In form, setting, and content the Merchant's Tale is so thoroughly an Italian *novella* that one is constantly surprised that the source has never been discovered; but one remembers that no Breton lay has been found as the source of the Franklin's Tale.

Some editors think that the tale, with the exception of the pear-tree episode — ancient versions of which are told in many lands — was Chaucer's own invention. Certainly it was he who gave it its really significant features. The satire on woman is derived almost entirely from the sources upon which he had already drawn so largely in the Prologue of the Wife of Bath. Furthermore this material is used with entirely Chaucerian originality, not to point an attack but to characterize the actors in the story and supply the setting for the plot.

None of the *Canterbury Tales* is more immoral than many of the most widely read novels of today, but it is true that some of Chaucer's most brilliantly written tales are marred by a vulgarity which he himself recognized would cause many a reader of his own time to "turne over the leef." This is one of them.]

'Ey Goddes mercy!' seyde oure Hooste tho;
'Now swich a wyf I pray God kepe me fro!
Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees
In wommen been; for ay as bisy as bees
Been they us sely men for to deceyve,
And from a soothë evere wol they weyve —
By this Marchauntes tale it preveth weel.
But doutelees, as trewe as any steel
I have a wyf, though that she poure be;
But of hir tonge a labbyng shrewe is she;
And yet she hath an heepe of vices mo.
Therof no fors; lat alle swiche thynges go!
But wyte ye what? In conseil be it seyd,
Me reweth soore I am unto hire teyd;
For and I sholde rekenen every vice
Which that she hath, ywis I were to nyce;
And cause why. It sholde reported be,
And toold to hire of somme of this meynee —
Of whom it nedeth nat for to declare,
Syn wommen konnen outen swich chaffare.
And eek my wit suffiseth nat therto
To tellen al; wherfore my tale is do.'

[FRAGMENT V (GROUP F)

THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK]

'Squier, come neer, if it youre wille be,
And sey somwhat of love; for certes ye
Konnen theron as muche as any man.'
'Nay, sire,' quod he; 'but I wol seye as I kan
With hertly wyl; for I wol nat rebelle
Agayn youre lust. A tale wol I telle.
Have me excused if I speke amys;
My wyl is good, and lo, my tale is this:

Heere bigynneth the Squieres Tale.

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,
Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed Russye,
Thurgh which ther dyde many a doughty man.
This noble kyng was cleped Cambyuskan;
Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
That ther was nowher, in no regioun,
So excellent a lord in alle thyng.
Hym lakked noght that longeth to a kyng;
And of the secte of which that he was born,
He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn.
And therto he was hardy, wys, and riche;
And pitous, and just, alwey yliche;
Sooth of his word, benigne and honurable;
Of his corage as any centre stable;
Yong, fressh, and strong, in armes desirous
As any bacheler of al his hous.
A fair persone he was, and fortunat;
And kepte alwey so wel roial estat
That ther was nowher swich another man.
This noble kyng, this Tartre Cambyuskan,

Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf;
Of whiche the eldeste hightè Algarsyf,
That oother sone was cleped Cambalo.
A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also
That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
But for to tellè yow al hir beautee,
It lyth nat in my tonge, nyn my konnyng;
I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.
Myn Englissh eek is insufficient;
It moste been a rethor excellent
That koude hise colours longynge for that art
If he sholde hire discryven every part;
I am noon swich, I moot speke as I kan.
And so bifel that whan this Cambyuskan
Hath twenty wynter born his diademe,
As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,
He leet the feeste of his nativitee
Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee.
The last Idus of March, after the yeer,
Phebus the sonne ful joly was and cleer,
For he was neigh his exaltacion,
In Martes face, and in his mansion
In Ariès, the colerik hoote signe.
Ful lusty was the weder and benigne;
For which the fowles agayn the sonne sheene —
What for the seson and the yonge grene —
Ful loude songen hire affeccions.
Hem semed han geten hem proteccions
Agayn the swerd of wynter keene and coold.
This Cambyuskan of which I have yow toold
In roial vestiment sit on his deys,
With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys;
And halt his feeste so solempne and so ryche
That in this world ne was ther noon it lyche;
Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,
Thanne wolde it occupie a someres day.
And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse
At every cours the ordre of hirè servyse.
I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,

Ne of hir swannes, nor of hire heronsewes. —
Eek in that lond, as tellen knyghtes olde,
Ther is som mete that is ful deynte holde
That in this lond men recche of it but smal. —
Ther nys no man that may reporten al.
I wol nat taryen yow, for it is pryme;
And for it is no fruyt, but los of tyme,
Unto my firste I wole have my recours.
And so bifel that after the thridde cours,
Whil that this kyng sit thus in his nobleye,
Herknynge hise mynstrales hir thynges pleye
Biforn hym at the bord deliciously,
In at the halle dore al sodeynly
Ther cam a knyght upon a steede of bras;
And in his hand a brood mirour of glas;
Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ryng,
And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng;
And up he rideth to the heighe bord.
In al the halle ne was ther spoken a word
For merveille of this knyght. Hym to biholde,
Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.
This strange knyght that cam thus sodeynly,
Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,
Saleweth kyng, and queene, and lordes alle,
By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
With so heigh reverence and obeisance,
As wel in spechë as in contenance,
That Gawayn, with his olde curteisye,
Though he were comen ayeyn out of Fairye,
Ne koude hym nat amende with a word.
And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
He with a manly voys seith his message
After the forme used in his langage,
Withouten vice of silable or of lettre.
And for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
Accordant to hise wordes was his cheere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
Al be that I kan nat sowne his stile,
Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a style,

Yet seye I this: as to commune entente,
Thus muche amounteth al that evere he mente,
If it so be that I have it in mynde.
He seyde: 'The kyng of Arabe and of Inde —
My lige lord — on this solempne day
Saleweth yow as he best kan and may,
And sendeth yow in honour of youre feeste,
By me, that am al redy at youre heeste,
This steede of bras, that esily and weel
Kan in the space of o day natureel —
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres —
Wher-so yow lyst, in droghte or elles shoures,
Beren youre body into every place
To which youre herte wilneth for to pace,
Withouten wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or if yow lyst to fleen as hye in the air
As dooth an egle whan that hym list to soore,
This same steede shal bere yow, evere moore
Withouten harm, til ye be ther yow leste,
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste;
And turne ayeyn with writhyng of a pyn.
He that it wroghte koude ful many a gyn.
He wayted many a constellacion
Er he had doon this operacion;
And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.
'This mirrour eek that I have in myn hond
Hath swich a myght that men may in it see
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Unto youre regne, or to youreself also,
And openly who is youre freend or foo.
And over al this, if any lady bright
Hath set hire herte in any maner wight,
If he be fals she shal his treson see,
His newe love, and al his subtiltee,
So openly that ther shal nothyng hyde.
Wherfore, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour and this ryng that ye may see
He hath sent unto my lady Canacee,
Youre excellente doghter that is heere.

'The vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,
Is this: that if hire lust it for to were
Upon hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
Ther is no fowel that fleeth under the hevene
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn,
And answere hym in his langage ageyn;
And every gras that groweth upon roote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do boote,
Al be hise woundes never so depe and wyde.
'This naked swerd that hangeth by my syde
Swich vertu hath that what man so ye smyte,
Thurghout his armure it wole hym kerve and byte,
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;
And what man that is wounded with a strook,
Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
To stroke hym with the plat in thilke place
Ther he is hurt; this is as muche to seyn,
Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
Strike hym in the wounde and it wol close.
This is a verray sooth, withouten glose;
It failleth nat whils it is in youre hoold.'
And whan this knyght hath thus his tale toold,
He rideth out of halle and doun he lighte.
His steede, which that shoon as sonne brighte,
Stant in the courte stille as any stoon.
This knyght is to his chambre lad anoon,
And is unarmed and unto mete yset.
The presentes been ful roially yfet —
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour —
And born anon into the heighe tour
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore;
And unto Canacee this ryng was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
But sikerly, withouten any fable,
The hors of bras that may nat be remewed,
It stant as it were to the ground yglewed.
Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
For noon engyn of wyndas ne polyve;

And cause why, for they kan nat the craft.
And therfore in the place they han it laft
Til that the knyght hath taught hem the manere
To voyden hym, as ye shal after heere.
  Greet was the prees that swarmeth to and fro
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so;
For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
So wel proporcioned for to been strong,
Right as it were a steede of Lumbardye;
Therwith so horsly and so quyk of eye
As it a gentil Poilleys courser were;
For certes, fro his tayl unto his ere,
Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende
In no degree, as al the peple wende.
But everemoore hir mooste wonder was
How that it koude go, and was of bras.
It was a fairye, as al the peple semed.
Diverse folk diversely they demed;
As many heddes as manye wittes ther been.
They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
And maden skiles after hir fantasies,
Rehersynge of thise olde poetries;
And seyde that it was lyk the Pegasee —
The hors that hadde wynges for to flee —
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,
That broghte Troie to destruccion,
As men may in thise olde geestes rede.
  'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is everemoore in drede.
I trowe som men of armes been therinne
That shapen hem this citee for to wynne.
It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe.'
  Another rowned to his felawe lowe
And seyde, 'He lyeth; it is rather lyk
An apparence ymaad by som magyk,
As jogelours pleyen at thise feestes grete.'
Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demeth comunly.
Of thynges that been maad moore subtilly
Than they kan in hir lewednesse comprehende

They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
That born was up into the hye tour,
Hou men myghte in it swiche thynges se.
Another answerde and seyde it myghte wel be
Naturelly, by composicions
Of anglis and of slye reflexions;
And seyden that in Rome was swich oon.
They speken of Alocen, and Vitulon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectives,
As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.
And oother folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde percen thurghout everythyng;
And fille in speche of Thelophus the kyng,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere —
For he koude with it bothe heele and dere,
Right in swich wise as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han youreselven herd.
They speken of sondry hardyng of metal;
And speke of medicynes therwithal,
And how and whanne it sholde yharded be;
Which is unknowe, algates unto me.
Tho speeke they of Canaceës ryng;
And seyden alle that swich a wonder thyng
Of craft of rynges herde they nevere noon,
Save that he Moyses and kyng Salomon
Hadden a name of konnyng in swich art.
Thus seyn the peple, and drawen hem apart.
But nathelees, somme seiden that it was
Wonder to maken of fern asshen glas,
And yet nys glas nat lyk asshen of fern.
But for they han yknowen it so fern,
Therfore cesseth hir janglyng and hir wonder.
As soore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on myst,
And on alle thyng til that the cause is wyst.
Thus jangle they, and demen, and devyse,
Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.

Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,
And yet ascendynge was the beest roial,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
Whan that this Tartre kyng, this Cambyuskan,
Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye.
Toforn hym gooth the loude mynstralcye,
Til he cam to his chambre of parementz,
Ther-as they sownen diverse instrumentz
That it is lyk an hevene for to heere.
Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere,
For in the Fyssh hir lady sat ful hye
And looketh on hem with a freendly eye.
This noble kyng is set up in his trone.
This strange knyght is fet to hym ful soone,
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
Heere is the revel and the jolitee
That is nat able a dul man to devyse;
He moste han knowen love and his servyse
And been a feestlych man as fressh as May
That sholde yow devysen swich array.
Who koude telle yow the forme of daunces
So unkouthe and so fresshe contenaunces,
Swich subtil lookyng and dissymulynges
For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvynges?
No man but Launcelet; and he is deed!
Therfore I passe of al this lustiheed.
I sey namoore; but in this jolynesse
I lete hem til men to the soper dresse.
The styward bit the spices for to hye
And eek the wyn; in al this melodye
The usshers and the squiers been ygoon;
The spices and the wyn is come anoon.
They ete and drynke. And whan this hadde an ende,
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende.
The service doon, they soupen al by day.
What nedeth me rehercen hire array?
Ech man woot wel that a kynges feeste
Hath plentee to the mooste and to the leeste,
And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.

At after-soper gooth this noble kyng
To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
Of lordes and of ladyes hym aboute.
  Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras
That syn the grete sege of Troie was,
Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,
Ne was ther swich a wondryng as was tho.
But fynally the kyng axeth this knyght
The vertu of this courser, and the myght,
And preyde hym to telle his governaunce.
  This hors anoon bigan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde hand upon his reyne
And seyde, 'Sire, ther is namoore to seyne
But whan yow list to ryden anywhere,
Ye mooten trille a pyn stant in his ere,
Which I shal yow telle bitwix us two;
Ye moote nempne hym to what place also,
Or to what contree that yow list to ryde,
And whan ye come ther-as yow list abyde,
Bidde hym descende, and trille another pyn —
For therin lith theffect of al the gyn —
And he wol doun descende, and doon youre wille.
And in that place he wol stonde stille;
Though al the world the contrarie hadde yswore,
He shal nat thennes been ydrawe nor ybore.
Or if yow list to bidde hym thennes goon,
Trille this pyn and he wol vanysshe anoon
Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
And come agayn, be it by day or nyght,
Whan that yow list to clepen hym ageyn
In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn
Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful soone.
Ride whan yow list; ther is namoore to doone.'
  Enformed whan the kyng was of that knyght,
And hath conceyved in his wit aright
The manere and the forme of al this thyng,
Thus glad and blithe this noble doughty kyng
Repeireth to his revel as biforn.
  The brydel is unto the tour yborn

And kept among hise jueles leeve and deere;
The hors vanysshed, I noot in what manere,
Out of hir sighte — ye gete namoore of me.
But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
This Cambyuskan hise lordes festeiynge
Til wel ny the day bigan to sprynge.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

The norice of digestioun — the sleep —
Gan on hem wynke and bad hem taken keep
That muchel drynke and labour wolde han reste;
And with a galpyng mouth hem alle he keste
And seydë it was tyme to lye adoun,
For blood was in his domynacioun.
'Cherisseth blood, Natures freend,' quod he.
They thanken hym, galpynge, by two, by thre;
And every wight gan drawe hym to his reste,
As sleepe hem bad; they tooke it for the beste.
Hire dremes shul nat been ytoold for me;
Ful were hire heddes of fumositee,
That causeth dreem of which ther nys no charge.
They slepen til that it was pryme large —
The mooste part, but it were Canacee.
She was ful mesurable; as wommen be.
For of hir fader hadde she take leve
To goon to reste soone after it was eve.
Hir liste nat appalled for to be,
Ne on the morwe unfeestlich for to se;
And slepte hire firste sleepe, and thanne awook;
For swich a joye she in hir herte took
Bothe of hir queynte ryng and hire mirour
That twenty tyme she changed hir colour.
And in hire sleepe, right for impression
Of hire mirour, she hadde avision.
Wherfore er that the sonne gan up glyde
She cleped on hir maistresse hire bisyde,
And seyde that hire liste for to ryse.
Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse

As hire maistressë answerde hire anon,
And seyde, 'Madame, whider wil ye goon
Thus erly, for the folk been alle on reste?'
'I wol,' quod she, 'arise — for me leste
No lenger for to slepe — and walke aboute.'
Hire maistresse clepeth wommen, a greet route;
And up they rysen wel a ten or twelve.
Up riseth fresshe Canacee hirselve,
As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,
That in the Ram is foure degrees up ronne —
Noon hyer was he whan she redy was —
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed, after the lusty seson soote,
Lightly for to pleye and walke on foote;
Nat but with fyve or sixe of hir meynee;
And in a trench, forth in the park, gooth she.
The vapour which that fro the erthe glood
Made the sonne to seme rody and brood,
But nathelees it was so fair a sighte
That it made alle hire hertes for to lighte,
What for the seson and the morwenynge,
And for the foweles that she herde synge;
For right anon she wiste what they mente
Right by hir song, and knew al hire entente.
The knotte why that every tale is toold,
If it be taried til that lust be coold
Of hem that han it after herkned yoore,
The savour passeth — ever lenger the moore —
For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee.
And by the same reson, thynketh me,
I sholde to the knotte condescende,
And maken of hir walkyng soone an ende.
Amydde a tree, for drye as whit as chalk,
As Canacee was pleyyng in hir walk,
Ther sat a faucon over hire heed ful hye
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
That all the wode resouned of hire cry.
Ybeten hath she hirself so pitously
With bothe hir wynges til the rede blood

Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.
And evere in oon she cryde alwey and shrighte,
And with hir beek hirselven so she prighte
That ther nys tygre, ne noon so crueel beest
That dwelleth outher in wode or in forest,
That nolde han wept, if that she wepe koude,
For sorwe of hire, she shrighte alwey so loude.
For ther nas nevere no man yet on lyve —
If that I koude a faucon wel discryve —
That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
Of shape, and al that myghte yrekened be.
A faucon peregryn thanne semed she
Of fremde land; and everemoore as she stood,
She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,
Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.
This faire kynges doghter, Canacee —
That on hir fynger baar the queynte ryng
Thurgh which she understood wel everythyng
That any fowel may in his leden seyn
And koude answeren hym in his ledene ageyn —
Hath understonde what this faucon seyde;
And wel neigh, for the routhe, almoost she deyde.
And to the tree she gooth ful hastily;
And on this faukon looketh pitously;
And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel she wiste
The faukon moste fallen fro the twiste
Whan that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.
A longe while to wayten hire she stood,
Til atte laste she spak in this manere
Unto the hauk, as ye shal after heere:
'What is the cause — if it be for to telle —
That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?'
Quod Canacee unto the hauk above.
'Is this for sorwe of deeth? or los of love?
For, as I trowé, thise been causes two
That causeth moost a gentil herte wo.
Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke,
For ye youreself upon yourself yow wreke;

Which proveth wel that outher love or drede
Moot been encheson of youre cruel dede.
Syn that I see noon oother wight yow chace,
For love of God, as dooth youreselven grace!
Or what may been youre helpe? for west nor est
Ne saugh I nevere er now no bryd ne beest
That ferde with hymself so pitously.
Ye sle me with youre sorwe, verraily,
I have of yow so greet compassioun.
For Goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;
And as I am a kynges doghter trewe,
If that I verraily the cause knewe
Of youre disese, if it lay in my myght
I wolde amenden it er that it were nyght,
As wisly helpe me the grete God of kynde.
And herbes shal I right ynowe yfynde
To heele with youre hurtes hastily.'
Tho shrighte this faucon yet moore pitously
Than ever she dide; and fil to grounde anon,
And lith aswowne deed and lyk a stoon,
Til Canacee hath in hire lappe hire take
Unto the tyme she gan of swough awake.
And after that she of hir swough gan breyde,
Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde:
'That pitee renneth soone in gentil herte,
Feelynge his similitude in peynes smerte,
Is preved al day, as men may it see,
As wel by werk as by auctoritee;
For gentil herte kitheth gentillesse.
I se wel that ye han of my distresse
Compassion, my faire Canacee,
Of verray, wommanly benignytee
That Nature in youre principles hath yset.
But for noon hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obeye unto youre herte free,
And for to maken othere be war by me —
As by the whelpe chasted is the leon —
Right for that cause and that conclusion,
Whil that I have a leyser and a space,

Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace.'
And evere whil that oon hir sorwe tolde,
That oother weepe as she to water wolde;
Til that the faucon bad hire to be stille,
And with a syk, right thus she seyde hir wille:
'That I was bred — allas, that harde day! —
And fostred in a roche of marbul gray
So tendrely that no thyng eyled me!
I nyste nat what was adversitee,
Til I koude flee ful hye under the sky.
'Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,
That semed welle of alle gentillesse.
Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
It was so wrapped under humble cheere,
And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
That I ne koude han wend he koude feyne,
So depe in greyn he dyed his colours.
Right as a serpent hit hym under floures
Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,
Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,
Dooth so hise cérymonyes and obeisances,
And kepeth in semblant alle hise observances
That sowneth into gentillesse of love.
As in a toumbe is al the faire above
And under is the corps swich as ye woot,
Swich was this ypocrite bothe coold and hoot.
And in this wise he served his entente,
That, save the feend, noon wiste what he mente;
Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned,
And many a yeer his service to me feyned,
Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce,
Al innocent of his corouned malice —
For-ferd of his deeth, as thoughte me —
Upon hise othes and his seuretee,
Graunted hym love upon this condicioun,
That everemoore myn honour and renoun
Were saved, bothe privee and apert;
This is to seyn, that, after his desert,

I yaf hym al myn hertë and my thoght —
God woot and he that ootherwise noght! —
And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay.
But sooth is seyd goon sithen many a day,
"A trewe wight and a theef thenken nat oon."
And whan he saugh the thyng so fer ygoon
That I hadde graunted hym fully my love,
In swich a gyse as I have seyd above,
And yeven hym my trewe herte as free
As hé swoor that he yaf his herte to me,
Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse,
Fil on hise knees, with so devout humblesse,
With so heigh réverence, and — as bý his cheere —
So lyk a gentil lovere of manere,
So ravysshed as it semed for the joye,
That nevere Jason, ne Parys of Troye —
Jason? — certes, ne noon oother man
Syn Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as wríten folk biforn,
Ne nevere syn the firste man was born —
Ne koude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophymes of his art,
Ne were worthy unbokelen his galoche
Ther doublenesse or feynyng sholde approche,
Ne so koude thanke a wight as he dide me.
His manere was an hevene for to see
Til any womman, were she never so wys,
So peynted he and kembde at point devys
As wel hise wordes as his contenance.
'And I so loved hym for his obeisance,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That if so were that anythyng hym smerte,
Al were it never so lite, and I it wiste,
Me thoughte I felte deeth myn herte twiste.
'And shortly, so ferforth this thyng is went
That my wyl was his willes instrument;
This is to seyn, my wyl obeyed his wyl
In alle thyng as fer as reson fil,
Kepynge the boundes of my worshipe evere.

Ne nevere hadde I thyng so lief, ne levere,
As hym, God woot; ne nevere shal namo.
'This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two
That I supposed of hym noght but good.
But finally, thus atte laste it stood,
That Fortune wolde that he moste twynne
Out of that place which that I was inne.
Wher me was wo that is no question!
I kan nat make of it discripsion;
For o thyng dare I tellen boldely,
I knowe what is the peyne of deeth therby;
Swich harme I felte for he ne myghte bileve.
So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefully eek that I wende verraily
That he had felt as muchë harm as I,
Whan that I herde hym speke and saugh his hewe.
But nathelees I thoughte he was so trewe
And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
Withinne a litel while, sooth to seyn;
And reson wolde eek that he moste go
For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
That I made vertu of necessitee
And took it wel, syn that it moste be.
As I best myghte, I hidde fro hym my sorwe,
And took hym by the hond, Seint John to borwe,
And seyde hym thus: "Lo, I am youres al!
Beth swich as I to yow have been and shal!"
'What he answerde it nedeth noght reherce.
Who kan sey bet than he? who kan do werse?
Whan he hath al seyd, thanne hath he doon.
"Therfore bihoveth hire a ful long spoon
That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I seye.
'So atte laste, he moste forth his weye;
And forth he fleeth til he cam ther hym leste.
Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste,
I trowe he hadde thilke text in mynde
That "allë thyng repeirynge to his kynde
Gladeth hymself"; thus seyn men, as I gesse.
'Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse,

As briddes doon that men in cages fede;
For though thou nyght and day take of hem hede,
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,
And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed, and milk,
Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe,
He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
And to the wode he wole, and wormes ete;
So newefangel been they of hire mete,
And loven novelrie, of propre kynde,
No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bynde.
'So ferde this tercelet, allas the day!
Though he were gentil born, and fressh and gay,
And goodlich for to seen, humble and free,
He saugh upon a tyme a kyte flee,
And sodeynly he loved this kyte so
That al his love is clene fro me ago;
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse.
Thus hath the kyte my love in hire servyse,
And I am lorn withouten remedie.'
And with that word this faucon gan to crie,
And swowned eft in Canaceës barm.
Greet was the sorwe for the haukes harm
That Canacee and alle hir wommen made.
They nyste hou they myghte the faucon glade;
But Canacee hom bereth hire in hir lappe,
And softely in plastres gan hire wrappe
Ther-as she with hire beek hadde hurt hirselve.
Now kan nat Canacee but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and make saves newe
Of herbes preciouse and fyne of hewe,
To heelen with this hauk. Fro day to nyght
She dooth hire bisynesse and hire fulle myght;
And by hire beddes heed she made a mewe,
And covered it with veluëttes blewe,
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene,
And al withoute the mewe is peynted grene;
In which were peynted alle thise false fowles —
As beth thise tidyves, tercelettes, and owles;
Right for despit, were peynted hem bisyde

Pyês, on hem for to crie and chyde.
Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk kepyng;
I wol namoore as now speke of hir ryng,
Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
How that this faucon gat hire love ageyn —
Repentant, as the storie telleth us —
By mediacion of Cambalus,
The kynges sone of which that I yow tolde.
But hennesforth I wol my proces holde
To speken of aventures and of batailles,
That nevere yet was herd so grete mervailles.
First wol I telle yow of Cambyuskan,
That in his tyme many a citee wan;
And after wol I speke of Algarsif —
How that he wan Theodera to his wif,
For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was,
Ne hadde he be holpen by the steede of bras;
And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
That faught in lystes with the bretheren two
For Canacee er that he myghte hire wynne.
And ther I lefte I wol ayeyn bigynne.

Explicit secunda pars. Incipit pars tercia.

Appollo whirleth up his chaar so hye
Til that the god Mercurius' hous, the slye
[*The tale is incomplete.*]

Heere folwen the wordes of the Frankelyn to the Squier, and the wordes of the Hoost to the Frankelyn.

'In feith, Squiér, thow hast thee wel yquit
And gentilly; I preise wel thy wit,'
Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considerynge thy yowthe.
So feelyngly thou spekest, sire, I allowe the.
As to my doom, ther is noon that is heere,
Of eloquence that shal be thy peere,
If that thou lyve. God yeve thee good chaunce,

And in vertu sende thee continuaunce!
For of thy spechë I have greet deyntee.
I have a sone, and by the Trinitee,
I hadde levere than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,
He were a man of swich discrecion
As that ye been. Fy on possession,
But-if a man be vertuous withal!
I have my sone snybbed and yet shal,
For he to vertu listneth nat entende;
But for to pleye at dees and to despende
And lese al that he hath is his usage;
And he hath levere talken with a page
Than to comune with any gentil wight
There he myghte lerne gentillesse aright.'
'Straw for youre gentillesse!' quod our Hoost;
'What, Frankeleyn! pardee, sire, wel thou woost
That ech of yow moot tellen atte leste
A tale or two, or breken his biheste.'
'That knowe I wel, sire,' quod the Frankeleyn;
'I prey yow haveth me nat in desdeyn,
Though to this man I speke a word or two.'
'Telle on thy tale, withouten wordes mo!'
'Gladly, sire Hoost,' quod he, 'I wole obeye
Unto your wyl; now herkneth what I seye.
I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse.
I prey to God that it may plesen yow;
Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow.'
Explicit.

The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale.

Thise olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes,
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge;
Whiche layes with hir instrumentz they songe,
Or elles redden hem, for hir plesance;
And oon of hem have I in remembrance,

Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan.
But sires, bycause I am a burel man,
At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche,
Have me excused of my rude speche.
I lerned nevere rethorik certeyn;
Thyng that I speke it moot be bare and pleyn;
I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero;
Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swichë as men dye or peynte;
Colours of rethoryke been to queynte;
My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere.
But if yow list, my tale shul ye heere.

Heere bigynneth the Frankeleyns Tale.

In Armorik, that called is Britayne,
Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne
To serve a lady in his beste wise;
And many a labour, many a greet emprise,
He for his lady wroghte er she were wonne;
For she was oon the faireste under sonne,
And eek therto comen of so heigh kynrede
That wel unnethes dorste this knyght, for drede,
Telle hire his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.
But atte laste she, for his worthynesse,
And namely for his meke obeÿsance,
Hath swich a pitee caught of his penance
That pryvely she fil of his accord
To take hym for hir housbonde and hir lord —
Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves.
And for to lede the moore in blisse hir lyves,
Of his free wyl he swoor hire as a knyght
That nevere in al his lyf he, day ne nyght,
Ne sholde upon hym take no maistrie
Agayn hir wyl, ne kithe hire jalousie,
But hire obeye and folwe hir wyl in al,
As any lovere to his lady shal;

Save that the name of soveraynetee,
That wolde he have, for shame of his degree.
She thanked hym, and with ful greet humblesse
She seyde, 'Sire, sith of youre gentillesse
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne —
Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us tweyne
As in my gilt were outher werre or stryf —
Sire, I wol be youre humble, trewe wyf.
Have heer my trouthe til that myn herte breste.'
Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste.
For o thyng, sires, saufly dar I seye,
That freendes everych oother moot obeye
If they wol longe holden compaignye.
Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye;
Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon
Beteth hise wynges, and farewel! he is gon.
Love is a thyng as any spirit free.
Wommen, of kynde, desiren libertee,
And nat to been constreyned as a thral;
And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal.
Looke who that is moost pacient in love,
He is at his avantage al above.
Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn,
For it venquysseth, as thise clerkes seyn,
Thynges that rigour sholde nevere atteyne.
For every word men may nat chide or pleyne.
Lerneth to suffre or elles, so moot I goon,
Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or noon;
For in this world, certein, ther no wight is
That he ne dooth or seith somtyme amys.
Ire, siknesse, or constellacion,
Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexion,
Causeth ful ofte to doon amys or speken.
On every wrong a man may nat be wreken;
After the tyme moste be temperance
To every wight that kan on governance.
And therfore hath this wise, worthy knyght,
To lyve in ese, suffrance hire bihight;
And she to hym ful wisly gan to swere

That nevere sholde ther be defaute in here.
Heere may men seen an humble wys accord;
Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord —
Servant in love and lord in mariage.
Thanne was he bothe in lordshipe and servage.
Servage? nay; but in lordshipe above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love —
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love acordeth to.
And whan he was in this prosperitee,
Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree,
Nat fer fro Pedmark, ther his dwellyng was,
Where-as he lyveth in blisse and in solas.
Who koude telle, but he hadde wedded be,
The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?
A yeer and moore lasted this blisful lyf,
Til that the knyght, of which I speke of thus,
That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,
Shoope hym to goon and dwelle a yeer or tweyne
In Engelond — that cleped was eek Briteyne —
To seke in armes worshipe and honour;
For al his lust he sette in swich labour;
And dwelled there two yeer — the book seith thus.
Now wol I stynten of (this) Arveragus,
And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
That loveth hire housbonde as hire hertes lyf.
For his absence wepeth she and siketh,
As doon thise noble wyves whan hem liketh.
She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth;
Desir of his presence hire so distreyneth
That al this wyde world she sette at noght.
Hire freendes, whiche that knewe hir hevy thoght,
Conforten hire in al that ever they may.
They prechen hire; they telle hire nyght and day
That causelees she sleeth hirself, allas!
And every confort possible in this cas
They doon to hire, with all hire bisynesse —
Al for to make hire leve hire hevynesse.

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,
Men may so longe graven in a stoon
Til som figure therinne emprented be.
So longe han they conforted hire, til she
Receyved hath, by hope and by reson,
The emprentyng of hire consolacion;
Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage;
She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.
And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
Hath sent hire lettres hoom of his welfare,
And that he wol come hastily agayn;
Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.
Hire freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,
And preyde hire on knees, for Goddes sake,
To come and romen hire in compaignye,
Awey to dryve hire derke fantasye.
And finally she graunted that requeste;
For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.
Now stood hire castel faste by the see;
And often with hire freendes walketh shee,
Hire to disporte, upon the bank an heigh;
Where-as she many a shipe and barge seigh
Seillynge hir cours where-as hem liste go.
But thanne was that a parcel of hire wo,
For to hirself ful ofte 'Allas!' seith she,
'Is ther no shipe, of so manye as I se,
Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn herte
Al warisshed of hisé bittre peynes smerte.'
Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thynke,
And caste hir eyen dounward fro the brynke;
But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
For verray feere so wolde hir herte quake
That on hire feet she myghte hire noght sustene.
Thanne wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously into the see biholde,
And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikes colde:
'Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye nothyng make.

But, Lord, thise grisly, feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusion
Of werk than any fair creacion
Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable —
Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?
For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest
Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest;
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde;
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.
'Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankynde; but how thanne may it bee
That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen —
Whiche meenes do no good but evere anoyen.
I woot wel clerkès wól seyn as hem leste
By argumentz, that al is for the beste
Thóugh I kan the causes nat yknowe.
But thilke God that made wynd to blowe
As kepe my lord! This my conclusion.
To clerkes lete I al this disputison;
But wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake
Were sonken into helle for his sake!
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte, for the feere.'
Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous teere.
Hire freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but disconfort;
And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.
They leden hire by ryveres and by welles,
And eek in othere places delitables.
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tyde,
Unto a gardyn that was ther bisyde,
In which that they hadde maad hir ordinance
Of vitaille and of oother purveiance,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.
And this was in the sixte morwe of May —

Which May hadde peynted with his softe shoures
This gardyn ful of leves and of floures.
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardyn, trewely,
That nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys,
But if it were the verray paradys.
The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han maked any herte lighte
That evere was born, but-if to greet siknesse,
Or to greet sorwe, helde it in distresse,
So ful it was of beautee with plesance.
At after-dyner gonne they to daunce
And synge also, save Dorigen allone;
Which made alwey hir compleint and hir moone,
For she ne saugh hym on the daunce go
That was hir housbonde and hir love also.
But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde,
And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.
Upon this daunce, amonges othere men,
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen,
That fressher was and jolyer of array,
As to my doom, than is the monthe of May.
He syngeth, daunceth, passynge any man
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.
Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,
Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve —
Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys.
And shortly if the sothe I tellen shal,
Unwityng of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that ycleped was Aurelius,
Hadde loved hire best of any creature
Two yeer and moore, as was his aventure,
But nevere dorste he tellen hire his grevance.
Withouten coppe he drank al his penance.
He was despeyred; nothyng dorste he seye,
Save in his songes somwhat wolde he wreye
His wo, as in a general compleynyng.

He seyde he lovede, and was biloved nothyng.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But langwissheth as a furye dooth in helle.
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.
In oother manere than ye heere me seye
Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwreye,
Save that paraventure somtyme at daunces,
Ther yongè folk kepen hir observaunces,
It may wel be he looked on hir face
In swich a wise as man that asketh grace.
But nothyng wistè she of his entente.
Nathelees it happed, er they thennes wente,
Bycausè that he was hire neighebour,
And was a man of worshipe and honour,
And hadde yknowen hym of tyme yoore,
They fille in spechë; and forth, moore and moore,
Unto this purpos drough Aurelius.
And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde thus:
'Madame,' quod he 'by God, that this world made,
So that I wiste it myghte youre herte glade,
I wolde that day that youre Arveragus
Wente over the see that I, Aurelius,
Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come agayn.
For wel I woot my servyce is in vayn;
My gerdon is but brestyng of myn herte.
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte,
For with a word ye may me sleen or save.
Heere at youre feet God wolde that I were grave!
I ne have as now no leyser moore to seye;
Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do me deye.'
She gan to looke upon Aurelius:
'Is this youre wyl?' quod she, 'and sey ye thus?
Nevere erst,' quod she, 'ne wiste I what ye mente.
But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne shal I nevere been untrewe wyf,

In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit;
I wol been his to whom that I am knyt.
Taak this for fynal answere, as of me.'
But after that, in pley thus seyde she:
'Aurelie,' quod she, 'by heighe God above,
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love,
Syn I yow se so pitously complayne,
Look what day that endelong Britayne
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon.
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
Of rokkes that ther nys no stoon ysene,
Thanne wol I love yow best of any man.
Have heer my trouthe in al that evere I kan,
For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.
Lat swiche folies out of youre herte slyde!
What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf
For to go love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan-so that hym liketh?'
Aurelius ful ofte soore siketh:
'Is ther noon oother grace in yow?' quod he.
'No, by that Lord,' quod she, 'that maked me!'
Wo was Aurelie whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde:
'Madame,' quod he, 'this were an inpossible!
Thanne moot I dye of sodeyn deth horrible.'
And with that word, he turned hym anon.
Tho coome hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and doun;
And nothyng wiste of this conclusioun.
But sodeynly bigonne revel newe,
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe,
For thorisonte hath reft the sonne his lyght —
— This is as muche to seye as it was nyght! —
And hoom they goon, in joye and in solas,
Save oonly wrecche Aurelius, allas!
He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte.
He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte;
Hym semed that he felte his herte colde.

Up to the hevene hise handes he gan holde,
And on hise knowes bare he sette hym doun,
And in his ravyng seyde his orisoun.
For verray wo out of his wit he breyde;
He nyste what he spak, but thus he seyde
With pitous herte; his pleynt hath he bigonne
Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne.
He seyde: 'Appollo, god, and governour
Of every plauntē, herbē, tree, and flour,
That yevest, after thy declinacion,
To ech of hem his tyme and his seson
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or heighe —
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable eighe
On wrecche Aurelie, which am but lorn!
Lo, lord, my lady hath my deeth y-sworn
Withoute gilt, but thy benignytee
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee.
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,
Ye may me helpen — save my lady — best.
Now voucheth sauf that I may yow devyse
How that I may been holpen, and in what wyse.
'Youre blisful suster, Lucina the sheene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and queene —
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet emperisse aboven hym is she —
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desir
Is to be quyked and lightned of youre fir;
For which she folweth yow ful bisily —
Right so the see desireth naturelly
To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and ryveres moore and lesse.
Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste;
Do this miracle or do myn herte breste —
That now next at this opposicion,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,
As preieth hire so greet a flood to brynge
That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge
The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne.

Thanne, certes, to my lady may I seye,
"Holdeth youre heste, the rokkes been aweye."
'Lord Phebus, dooth this miraclé for me.
Preye hire she go no faster cours than ye;
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.
Thanne shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
And spryng flood laste bothe nyght and day.
And but she vouche sauf in swich manere
To graunte me my sovereyn lady deere,
Prey hire to synken every rok adoun
Into hir owene dirke regioun,
Under the ground ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
Or nevere mo shal I my lady wynne.
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke.
Lord Phebus, se the teeris on my cheke,
And of my peyne have som compassioun!'
And with that word, in swowne he fil adoun,
And longe tyme he lay forth in a traunce.
His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,
Up caughte hym, and to bedde he hath hym broght.
Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght,
Lete I this woful creäture lye;
Chese he, for me, wheither he wol lyve or dye.
Arveragus, with heele and greet honour,
As he that was of chivalrie the flour,
Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.
O, blisful artow now, thou Dorigen!
That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne armes,
The fresshe knyght, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth thee as his owene hertes lyf.
Nothyng list hym to been ymaginatyf
If any wight had spoke, whil he was oute,
To hire of love. He hadde of it no doute;
He noght entendeth to no swich mateere,
But daunceth, justeth, maketh hire good cheere.
And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
And of the sike Aurelius I wol yow telle.
In langour, and in torment furyus,

Two yeer and moore lay wrecche Aurelyus
Er any foot he myghte on erthe gon;
Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,
Save of his brother, which that was a clerk.
He knew of al this wo and al this werk;
For to noon oother creäture, certeyn,
Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.
Under his brest he baar it moore secree
Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee.
His brest was hool, withoute for to sene,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.
And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure
In surgerye is perilous the cure,
But men myghte touche the arwe or come therby.
His brother weepe and wayled pryvely,
Til atte laste hym fil in remembrance
That whiles he was at Orliens in France —
As yonge clerkes that been lykerous
To reden artes that been curious
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne —
He hym remembred that upon a day
At Orliens in studie a book he say
Of magyk natureel, which his felawe —
That was that tyme a bacheler of lawe,
Al were he ther to lerne another craft —
Hadde prively upon his desk ylaft;
Which book spak muchel of the operacions
Touchynge the eighte and twenty mansions
That longen to the moone, and swich folye
As in oure dayes is nat worth a flye —
For Hooly Chirches feith in oure bileve
Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembraunce,
Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce;
And to hymself he seyde pryvely:
'My brother shal be warisshed hastily;
For I am siker that ther be sciences
By whiche men make diverse apparences,

Swiche as thise subtile tregetoures pleye;
For ofte at feestes have I wel herd seye
That tregetours withinne an halle large
Have maad come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun.
Somtyme hath semed come a grym leoun;
And somtyme floures sprynge as in a mede;
Somtyme a vyne, and grapes white and rede;
Somtyme a castel al of lym and stoon;
And whan hym lyked voyded it anoon —
Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.
'Now thanne conclude I thus: that if I myghte
At Orliens som oold felawe yfynde
That hadde this moones mansions in mynde,
Or oother magyk natureel above,
He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
For with an apparence a clerk may make
To mannes sighte that alle the rokkes blake
Of Britaigne weren yvoyded everichon
And shippes by the brynke comen and gon,
And in swich forme enduren a wowke or two.
Thanne were my brother warisshed of his wo;
Thanne moste she nedes holden hire biheste,
Or elles he shal shame hire atte leeste.'
What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?
Unto his brotheres bed he comen is,
And swich confort he yaf hym for to gon
To Orliens that he up stirte anon
And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare
In hope for to been lissed of his care.
Whan they were come almoost to that citee,
But-if it were a two furlong or thre,
A yong clerk romynge by hymself they mette,
Which that in Latyn thriftily hem grette,
And after that he seyde a wonder thyng.
'I knowe,' quod he, 'the cause of youre comyng.'
And er they ferther any foote wente,
He tolde hem al that was in hire entente.
This Briton clerk hym asked of felawes

The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes.
And he answerde hym that they dede were;
For which he weep ful ofte many a teere.
Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,
And with this magicien forth is he gon
Hoom to his hous; and made hem wel at ese.
Hem lakked no vitaille that myghte hem plese.
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh nevere noon.
He shewed hym er he wente to sopeer
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer.
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye —
The gretteste that evere were seyn with eye —
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.
He saugh, whan voyded were thise wilde deer,
This fauconers upon a fair ryver,
That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.
Tho saugh he knyghtes justyng in a playn.
And after this he dide hym swich plesaunce
That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce,
On which hymself he daunced, as hym thoughte.
And whan this maister that this magyk wroughte
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte hise handes two,
And farewel! al oure revel was ago.
And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous
Whil they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
But in his studie, ther-as hise bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.
To hym this maister called his squier,
And seyde hym thus, 'Is redy oure soper?
Almoost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad oure soper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
Into my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'
'Sire,' quod this squier, 'whan it liketh yow,
It is al redy; though ye wol right now.'
'Go we thanne soupe,' quod he, 'as for the beste;
This amorous folk somtyme moote han hir reste.'

At after-soper fille they in tretee
What somme sholde this maistres gerdon be
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it straunge, and swoor, so God hym save,
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have;
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.
Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,
Answerde thus: 'Fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men seye is round,
I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.
This bargayn is ful dryve, for we been knyt.
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe;
But looketh now for no necligence or slouthe
Ye tarie us heere no lenger than tomorwe.'
'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have heer my feith to borwe'
To bedde is goon Aurelius whan hym leste,
And wel ny al that nyght he hadde his reste.
What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.
Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne tooke they the righte way —
Aurelius and this mágicien bisyde —
And been descended ther they wolde abyde.
And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,
The colde, frosty seson of Decembre.
Phebus wex old and hewed lyk laton,
That in his hoote declynacion
Shoon as the burned gold with stremes brighte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Where-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.
The bittre frostes with the sleet and reyn
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fyr with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;
Biforn hym stant brawn of the tusked swyn,
And 'Nowel!' crieth every lusty man.
Aurelius in al that evere he kan
Dooth to his maister chiere and reverence,

And preyeth hym to doon his diligence
To bryngen hym out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte.
This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man
That nyght and day he spedde hym that he kan
To wayten a tyme of his conclusion;
This is to seye, to maken illusion
By swich an apparence, or jogelrye —
I ne kan no termes of astrologye —
That she and every wight sholde wene and seye
That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
Or ellis they were sonken under grounde.
So, atte laste, he hath his tyme yfounde
To maken hise japes and his wrecchednesse
Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.
Hise tables Tolletanes forth he brought,
Ful wel corrected; ne ther lakked nought
Neither his collect ne hise expans yeeris,
Nē hise rootes, nē hise othere geeris —
As been his centris, and hise argumentz,
And hise proporcioneles convenientz
For hise equacions in every thyng —
And by his eighte speere in his wirkyng
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above,
That in the nynte speere considered is;
Ful subtilly he hadde kalkuled al this.
Whan he hadde founde his firste mansion,
He knew the remenant by proporcion;
And knew the arisyng of his moone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel;
And knew ful weel the moones mansion
Acordaunt to his operacion;
And knew also hise othere observances
For swiche illusions and swiche meschances
As hethen folk useden in thilke dayes.
For which no lenger maked he delayes;
But thurgh his magik for a wyke or tweye
It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amys,
Awaiteth nyght and day on this myracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,
That voyded were thise rokkes everychon,
Doun to hise maistres feet he fil anon,
And seyde, 'I, woful wrecche Aurelius,
Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde.'
And to the temple his wey forth hath he holde,
Where-as he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anon right hee,
With dredful herte and with ful humble cheere,
Salewed hath his sovereyn lady deere.
'My righte lady,' quod this woful man,
'Whom I moost drede, and love as I best kan,
And lothest were of al this world displese;
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese
That I moste dyen heere at youre foot anon,
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;
But certes, outher moste I dye or pleyne.
Ye sle me, giltelees, for verray peyne.
But of my deeth thogh that ye have no routhe,
Avyseth yow er that ye breke youre trouthe.
Repenteth yow, for thilke God above,
Er ye me sleen bycause that I yow love;
For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight.
Nat that I chalange anythyng of right
Of yow, my sovereyn lady, but youre grace;
But in a gardyn yond, at swich a place,
Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
And in myn hand youre trouthe plighten ye
To love me best. God woot, ye seyde so,
Al be that I unworthy be therto.
Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,
Moore than to save myn hertes lyf right now.
I have do so as ye comanded me;
And if ye vouche sauf, ye may go see.
Dooth as yow list; have youre biheste in mynde;

For, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde.
In yow lith al to do me lyve or deye;
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye.'
He taketh his leve; and she astonied stood;
In al hir face nas a drope of blood.
She wende nevere han come in swich a trappe.
'Allas,' quod she, 'that evere this sholde happe!
For wende I nevere by possibilitee
That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be;
It is agayns the proces of Nature.'
And hoom she goth a sorweful creature;
For verray feere unnethe may she go.
She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,
And swowneth that it routhe was to see.
But why it was to no wight tolde shee,
For out of towne was goon Arveragus.
But to hirself she spak and seyde thus,
With face pale and with ful sorweful cheere,
In hire compleynt, as ye shal after heere:
'Allas!' quod she; 'on thee, Fortune, I pleyne,
That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne;
For which tescape woot I no socour
Save oonly deeth or elles dishonour.
Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese;
But nathelees, yet have I levere to lese
My lif than of my body have a shame,
Or knowe myselven fals, or lese my name.
And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis.
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this,
And many a mayde, yslayn hirself, allas!
Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
'Yis, certes; lo, thise stories beren witnesse.
Whan thritty tirauntz ful of cursednesse
Hadde slayn Phidon in Atthenes at feste,
They comanded hise doghtres for tareste
And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit,
Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delit;
And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
Upon the pavement, God yeve hem myschaunce!

For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede,
They prively been stirt into a welle.
And dreynte hemselven, as the bookes telle.
'They of Mecene leete enquere and seke
Of Lácedómye fifty maydens eke,
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye.
But was ther noon of al that compaignye
That she nas slayn, and with a good entente
Chees rather for to dye than assente
To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.
Why sholde I, thanne, to dye been in drede?
'Lo eek the tiraunt Aristoclides,
That loved a mayden heet Stymphalides.
Whan that hir fader slayn was on a nyght,
Unto Dianes temple goth she right,
And hente the ymage in hir handes two;
Fro which ymage wolde she nevere go —
No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace —
Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
'Now sith that maydens hadden swich despit
To been defouled with mannes foul delit,
Wel oghte a wyf rather hirselven slee
Than be defouled, as it thynketh me.
'What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
That at Cartage birafte hirself hir lyf?
For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,
She took hir children alle and skipte adoun
Into the fyr, and chees rather to dye
Than any Romayn dide hire vileynye.
'Hath nat Lucresse yslayn hirself — allas! —
At Romè, whan that she oppressed was
Of Tarquyn, for hire thoughte it was a shame
To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name?
'The sévene maydens of Melésie also
Han slayn hemself for verray drede and wo
Rather than folk of Gawle hem sholde oppresse.
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Koude I now telle as touchynge this mateere.

'Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere
Hirselven slow and leet hir blood to glyde
In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
And seyde, "My body at the leeste way
Ther shal no wight defoulen if I may."
'What sholde I mo ensamples heerof sayn?
Sith that so manye han hemselven slayn
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be,
I wol conclude that it is bet for me
To sleen myself than been defouled thus.
I wol be trewe unto Arveragus
Or rather sleen myself in som manere,
As dide Demociones doghter deere
Bycause that she wolde nat defouled be.
O Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee
To reden how thy doghtren deyde — allas! —
That slowe hemself for swich a manere cas.
'As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore,
The Theban mayden that for Nichanore
Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo.
'Another Theban mayden dide right so
For oon of Macidonye hadde hire oppressed;
She with hire deeth hir maydenhede redressed.
'What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas birafte hirself hir lyf?
'How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
His love, that rather for to dyen chees
Than for to suffre his body unburyed be.
'Lo, which a wyf was Alceste!' quod she.
'What seith Omer of goode Penalopee?
Al Grecë knowęth of hire chastitee.
'*Pardee*, of Laodomýa is writen thus,
That whan at Troie was slayn Protheselaus,
No lenger wolde she lyve after his day.
'The same of noble Porcia telle I may;
Withoutë Brutus koudë she nat lyve,
To whom she hadde al hool hir hertë yęve.
'The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesie
Honured is thurgh al the Barbarie.

'O Teuta queene, thy wyfly chastitee
To alle wyves may a mirour bee.
'The same thyng I seye of Bilyea,
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.'
Thus pleyned Dorigene a day or tweye,
Purposynge evere that she wolde deye.
But nathelees, upon the thridde nyght,
Hoom cam Arveragus, this worthy knyght,
And asked hire why that she weepe so soore.
And she gan wepen, ever lenger the moore.
'Allas,' quod she, 'that evere I was born!
Thus have I seyd,' quod she; 'thus have I sworn.'
And toold hym al, as ye han herd bifore;
It nedeth nat reherce it yow namoore.
This housbonde, with glad chiere, in freendly wyse,
Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse.
'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'
'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'God helpe me so as wys!
This is to muche, and it were Goddes wille!'
'Ye, wyf,' quod he; 'lat slepen that is stille.
It may be wel, paraventure, yet today.
Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by my fay;
For God so wisly have mercy upon me,
I hadde wel levere ystiked for to be,
For verray love which that I to yow have,
But-if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save.
"Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe."'
But with that word he brast anon to wepe,
And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,
That nevere whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,
To no wight telle thou of this aventure.
As I may best, I wol my wo endure,
Ne make no contenance of hevynesse,
That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse.'
And forth he cleped a squier and a mayde.
'Gooth forth anon with Dorigen,' he sayde,
'And bryngeth hire to swich a place anon.'
They take hir leve and on hir wey they gon,
But they ne wiste why she thider wente;

He nolde no wight tellen his entente.
Paraventure an heepe of yow, ywis,
Wol holden hym a lewed man in this,
That he wol putte his wyf in jupartie.
Herkneth the tale er ye upon hire crie;
She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth;
And whan that ye han herd the tale, demeth.
This squier, which that highte Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorus,
Of aventure happed hire to meete
Amydde the toun, right in the quykkest strete,
As she was bown to goon the wey forth right
Toward the gardyn ther-as she had hight.
And he was to the gardyn ward also;
For wel he spyed whan she wolde go
Out of hir hous to any maner place.
But thus they mette, of aventure or grace.
And he saleweth hire with glad entente,
And asked of hire whiderward she wente.
And she answerdë, half as she were mad,
'Unto the gardyn, as myn housbonde bad,
My trouthe for to holde, allas, allas!'
Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
And in his hertę haddę greet compassion
Of hire, and of hire lamentacion;
And of Arveragus the worthy knyght,
That bad hire holden al that she had hight —
So looth hym was his wyf sholde breke hir trouthe.
And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,
Considerynge the beste on every syde,
That fro his lust yet were hym levere abyde
Than doon so heigh a cherlyssh wrecchednesse
Agayns franchise and alle gentillesse;
For which, in fewe wordes seyde he thus:
'Madame, seyeth to youre lord Arveragus
That sith I se his grete gentillesse
To yow — and eek I se wel youre distresse —
That him were levere han shame — and that were routhe —
Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe,

I have wel levére evere to suffre wo
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.
I yow relesse, madame, into youre hond,
Quyt, every surement and every bond
That ye han maad to me as heer biforn
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.
My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
Of no biheste. And heere I take my leve
As of the treweste and the beste wyf
That evere yet I knew in al my lyf.
But every wyf be war of hire biheeste;
On Dorigene remembreth atte leeste!
Thus kan a squier doon a gentil dede
As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede.'
She thonketh hym upon hir knees al bare,
And hoom unto hir housbonde is she fare;
And tolde hym al, as ye han herd me sayd.
And be ye siker he was so weel apayd
That it were inpossible me to wryte.
What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?
Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf
In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf;
Nevere eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene;
He cherisseth hire as though she were a queene,
And she was to hym trewe for everemoore —
Of thise folk ye gete of me namoore.
Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,
Curseth the tyme that evere he was born.
'Allas,' quod he, 'allas, that I bihighte
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte
Unto this philosophre! How shal I do?
I se namoore but that I am fordo.
Myn heritage moot I nedes selle
And been a beggere. Heere may I nat dwelle
And shamen al my kynrede in this place,
But I of hym may gete bettre grace.
But nathelees I wole of hym assaye
At certeyn dayes yeer by yeer to paye,
And thanke hym of his grete curteisye;

My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.'
With herte soor he gooth unto his cofre,
And broghte gold unto this philosophre —
The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse;
And hym bisecheth, of his gentillesse,
To graunte hym dayes of the remenaunt;
And seydę, 'Maister, I dar wel make avaunt,
I failled nevere of my trouthe as yit.
For sikerly my dette shal be quyt
Towardes yow, howevere that I fare —
To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare.
But wolde ye vouche sauf, upon seuretee,
Two yeer or thre for to respiten me,
Thanne were I wel; for elles moot I selle
Myn heritage; ther is namoore to telle.'
This philosophre sobrely answerde
And seyde thus, whan he thise wordes herde:
'Have I nat holden covenant unto thee?'
'Yes, certes; wel and trewely,' quod he.
'Hastow nat had thy lady as thee liketh?'
'No, no!' quod he; and sorwefully he siketh.
'What was the cause? tel me if thou kan.'
Aurelius his tale anon bigan,
And tolde hym al, as ye han herd bifoore.
It nedeth nat to yow reherce it moore.
He seide Arveragus, of gentillesse,
Hadde levere dye in sorwe and in distresse
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.
The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde hym als,
How looth hire was to been a wikked wyf,
And that she levere had lost that day hir lyf;
And that hir trouthe she swoor thurgh innocence,
She nevere erst hadde herd speke of apparence.
'That made me han of hire so greet pitee,
And right as frely as he sente hire me
As frely sente I hire to hym ageyn.
This al and som; ther is namoore to seyn.'
This philosophre answerde: 'Leeve brother,
Everich of yow dide gentilly til oother.

Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght;
But God forbede, for his blisful myght,
But-if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede
As wel as any of yow, it is no drede.
'Sire, I releesse thee thy thousand pound
As thou right now were cropen out of the ground
Ne nevere er now ne haddest knowen me;
For, sire, I wol nat taken a peny of thee
For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.
Thou hast ypayed wel for my vitaille;
It is ynogh; and farewel, have good day!'
And took his hors and forth he goth his way.
Lordynges, this question thanne wolde I aske now:
Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?
Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
I kan namoore; my tale is at an ende.

Heere is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.

[FRAGMENT VI (GROUP C)

THE PHYSICIAN'S TALE]

Heere folweth the Phisiciens Tale.

[The Physician's Tale, of the death of the Roman maiden, Virginia, is omitted here. After it follow:]

The wordes of the Hoost to the Phisicien and the Pardoner.

Oure Hooste gan to swere as he were wood;
'Harrow!' quod he 'by nayles and by blood,
This was a fals cherl and a fals justise!
As shameful deeth as herte may devyse
Come to thise juges and hire advocatz!
Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!
Allas, to deere boughte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of Fortune and of Nature
Been cause of deeth to many a creature.
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte moore for harm than prow.
'But trewely, myn owene maister deere,
This is a pitous tale for to heere.
But nathelees, passe over; is no fors.
I pray to God, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne urynals and thy jurdones,
Thyn ypocras and eek thy galiones,
And every boyste ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and Oure Lady Seinte Marie!
So moot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!
Seyde I nat wel? I kan nat speke in terme,
But wel I woot thou doost myn herte to erme,

That I almoost have caught a cardynacle.
By *corpus*, bones, but I have triacle,
Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale,
Or but I heere anon a myrie tale,
Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.
'Thou beel amy, thou Pardoner,' he sayde,
'Telle us som myrthe or japes right anon.'
'It shal be doon,' quod he, 'by Seint Ronyon!
But first,' quod he, 'heere at this ale stake
I wol bothe drynke, and eten of a cake.'
And right anon the gentils gonne to crye:
'Nay! lat hym telle us of no ribaudye.
Telle us som moral thyng that we may leere
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly heere.'
'I graunte, ywis,'' quod he, 'but I moot thynke
Upon som honeste thyng while that I drynke.'

Heere folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas. Ad Thimotheum .6°.

''Lordynges,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And rynge it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I kan al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon and evere was,
''*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*''
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some.
Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk;
And after that thanne telle I forth my tales.
Bulles of popes, and of cardynales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacion,
And for to stire hem to devocion.

Thanne shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones —
Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon.
Thanne have I in laton a sholder boon
Which that was of an hooly Jewes sheep.
'Goode men,' I seye, 'taak of my wordes keep:
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow or calf or sheepe or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete or worm ystonge,
Taak water of that welle and wassh his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermoor,
Of pokkes and of scabbe and every soor
Shal every sheepe be hool that of this welle
Drynketh a draughte. Taak kepe eek what I telle:
If that the goode man that the beestes oweth
Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
Fastynge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte,
His beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.
And, sires, also it heeleth jalousie;
For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Lat maken with this water his potage,
And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste —
Al had she taken preestes two or thre.
Heere is a miteyn eek that ye may se.
He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,
He shal have multipliyng of his grayn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens — or elles grotes.
Goode men and wommen, o thyng warne I yow!
If any wight be in this chirche now
That hath doon synnë horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame of it, yshryven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath ymaked hir housbonde cokewold,
Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
To offren to my relikes in this place.
And whoso fyndeth hym out of swich fame,

They wol come up and offre, on Goddes name,
And I assoille hem by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle ygraunted was to me.'
  By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark, sith I was pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
I preche so as ye han herd bifoore,
And telle an hundred false japes moore.
Thanne peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.
Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
Of avarice and of swich cursednesse
Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free
To yeven hir pens, and namely unto me.
For myn entente is nat but for to wynne,
And nothyng for correccion of synne;
I rekke nevere, whan they been beryed,
Though that hir soules goon a-blakeberyed.
  For certes, many a predicacion
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencion:
Som for plesance of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ypocrisye;
And som for veyne glorie; and som for hate —
For whan I dar noon oother weyes debate,
Thanne wol I stynge hym with my tonge smerte
In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespased to my bretheren or to me.
For though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same,
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances;
Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.
  But shortly, myn entente I wol devyse:
I preche of nothyng but for coveityse.

Therfore my theme is yet, and evere was,
'*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*'
Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be gilty in that synne,
Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne
From avarice and soore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente;
I preche nothyng but for coveitise —
Of this mateere it oghte ynogh suffise.
Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories longe tyme agoon;
For lewed peple loven tales olde —
Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and holde.
What! trowe ye that whiles I may preche,
And wynne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol lyve in poverte wilfully?
Nay, nay! I thoghte it nevere trewely.
For I wol preche and begge in sondry landes;
I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,
Ne make baskettes and lyve therby,
Bycause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol noon of the apostles countrefete;
I wol have moneie, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the pouereste page,
Or of the pouereste wydwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun:
Youre likyng is that I shal telle a tale;
Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng
That shal by reson been at youre likyng;
For though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle kan,
Which I am wont to preche, for to wynne.
Now hoold youre pees! my tale I wol bigynne.

Heere bigynneth the Pardoners Tale.

In Flaundres whilom was a compaignye
Of yonge folk that haunteden folye —
As riot, hasard, stywes, and tavernes,
Where-as with harpes, lutes, and gyternes
They daunce and pleyen at dees bothe day and nyght,
And eten also and drynken over hir myght;
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifise
Withinne that develes temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluytee abhomynable.
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere.
Oure blissed Lordes body they to-tere —
Hem thoughte that Jewes rente hym noght ynough —
And ech of hem at otheres synne lough.
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres
Fetys and smale, and yonge frutesteres,
Syngeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres —
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed unto glotonye.
The hooly writ take I to my witnesse
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Looth, unkyndely,
Lay by hise doghtres two, unwityngly;
So dronke he was he nyste what he wroghte.
Herodes — whoso wel the Stories soghte —
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heeste
To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.
Senec seith a good word doutelees.
He seith he kan no difference fynde
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, fallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse!
O cause first of oure confusion!

O original of oure dampnacion
Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn:
Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye!
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye:
Adam oure fader and his wyf also
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede;
For whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt deffended on the tree,
Anon he was out cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how manye maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the moore mesurable
Of his diete, sittynge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that est and west and north and south,
In erthe, in eir, in water, men to swynke
To gete a gloton deyntee mete and drynke.
Of this matiere, O Paul, wel kanstow trete.
'Mete unto wombe, and wombe eek unto mete,
Shal God destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.
Allas! a foul thyng is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede
Whan man so drynketh of the white and rede.
The apostel wepyng seith ful pitously:
'Ther walken manye, of whiche yow toold have I —
I seye it now wepyng with pitous voys —
They been enemys of Cristes croys,
Of whiche the ende is deeth; wombe is hir god.'
O wombe! O bely! O stynkyng cod,
How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde!
Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grynde,
And turnen substaunce into accident,
To fulfillen al thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght awey

That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote.
Of spicerie, of leef, and bark, and roote
Shal been his sauce ymaked, by delit
To make hym yet a newer appetit.
But certes, he that haunteth swiche delices
Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.
A lecherous thyng is wyn, and dronkenesse
Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun';
And yet, God woot, Sampsoun drank nevere no wyn.
Thou fallest as it were a styked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honeste cure;
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecion.
In whom that drynke hath dominacion,
He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,
And namely fro the white wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in Fysshstrete or in Chepe.
This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes growynge faste by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes thre,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toune of Lepe —
Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeux toun;
And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun.'
But herkneth, lordes, o word, I yow preye:
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Looketh the Bible and ther ye may it leere.
Looke Attilla, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleepe, with shame and dishonour,
Bledynge ay at his nose in dronkenesse.

A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded unto Lamuel —
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I;
Redeth the Bible and fynde it expresly —
Of wyn-yevyng to hem that han justise.
Namoore of this, for it may wel suffise.
And now that I have spoken of glotonye,
Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.
Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,
And of deceite and cursed forswerynges,
Blasphemyng of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreeve and contrarie of honour
For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,
The moorë is he holden desolaat.
If that a pryncë useth hasardrye,
In alle governance and policye
He is, as by commune opinion,
Yholde the lasse in reputacion.
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corynthe in ful greet honour
Fro Lacidomye, to maken hire alliaunce.
And whan he cam, hym happede *par chaunce*
That alle the gretteste that were of that lond
Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond;
For which, as soonë as it myghte be,
He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde: 'Ther wol I nat lese my name,
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame
Yow for to allie unto none hasardours;
Sendeth othere wise embassadours;
For by my trouthe, me were levere dye
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye;
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours,
As by my wyl, ne as by my tretee.'
This wise philosophre, thus seyde hee.

Looke eek that to the kyng Demetrius
The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may fynden oother maner pley
Honeste ynough to dryve the day awey.
Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,
And fals sweryng yet moore reprevable.
The heighe God forbad sweryng at al —
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye,
'Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat lye,
And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnesse.'
But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.
Bihoold and se that in the firste table
Of heighe Goddes heestes honurable
Hou that the seconde heeste of hym is this:
'Take nat my name in ydel or amys.'
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich sweryng
Than homycide or any cursed thyng.
I seye that as by ordre thus it stondeth.
This knowen, that hise heestes understondeth,
How that the seconde heeste of God is that.
And forther-over, I wol thee telle al plat
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous
That of hise othes is to outrageous: —
'By Goddes precious herte,' and 'By His nayles,'
And 'By the blood of Crist that is in Hayles,
Sevene is my chaunce and thyn is *cynk* and *treye!*'
'By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This daggere shal thurghout thyn herte go!' —
This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two:
Forsweryng, ire, falsnesse, homycide.
Now for the love of Crist, that for us dyde,
Lete youre othes, bothe grete and smale!

But sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.
Thise riotours thre of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er prime rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke.
And as they sat, they herde a belle clynke
Biforn a cors was caried to his grave.
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave;
'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And looke that thou reporte his name weel.'
'Sire,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth neveradeel;
It was me toold er ye cam heer two houres.
He was, *pardee*, an old felawe of youres;
And sodeynly he was yslayn tonyght,
Fordronke, as he sat on his bench upright.
Ther cam a privee theef men clepeth deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
And wente his wey, withouten wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thynketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie.
Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore!
Thus taughte me my dame; I sey namoore.'
'By Seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,
'The child seith sooth; for he hath slayn this yeer,
Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village,
Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page;
I trowe his habitacion be there.
To been avysed greet wysdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'
'Ye, Goddes armes!' quod this riotour,
Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?
I shal hym seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to Goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes! we thre been al ones.
Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother;

And we wol sleen this false traytour deeth.
He shal be slayn which that so manye sleeth,
By Goddes dignitee, er it be nyght!'
  Togidres han thise thre hir trouthes plight
To lyve and dyen, ech of hem for oother,
As though he were his owene yboren brother.
And up they stirte, al dronken in this rage;
And forth they goon towardes that village
Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn.
And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rente —
Deeth shal be deed if that they may hym hente!
  Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,
Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,
An oold man and a poure with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordes, God yow see!'
  The proudeste of thise riotours three
Answerde agayn: 'What! carl, with sory grace!
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
Why lyvestow so longe in so greet age?'
  This olde man gan looke in his visage,
And seyde thus: 'For I ne kan nat fynde
A man, though that I walked into Ynde,
Neither in citee, nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille
As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.
  'Ne Deeth, allas, ne wol nat han my lyf!
Thus walke I, lyk a restelees kaityf,
And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
I knokke with my staf bothe erly and late.
And seye, "Leeve mooder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanysshe, flessh, and blood, and skyn!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Mooder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye, for an heyre clowt to wrappe me."
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace;

For which ful pale and welked is my face.
'But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileynye,
But he trespasse in word or elles in dede.
In Hooly Writ ye may yourself wel rede:
"Agayns an oold man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde arise"; wherfore I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now,
Namoore than that ye wolde men did to yow
In agë, if that ye so longe abyde.
And God be with yow, where ye go or ryde!
I moote go thider as I have to go.'
'Nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so!'
Seyde this oother hasardour anon;
'Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traytour Deeth,
That in this contree alle oure freendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye!
Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abye,
By God and by the hooly sacrement!
For soothly, thou art oon of his assent
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'
'Now, sires,' quod he, 'if that ye be so leef
To fynde Deeth, turne up this croked wey;
For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
Under a tree; and there he wole abyde;
Noght for youre boost he wole him no thyng hyde.
Se ye that ook? Right there ye shal hym fynde.
God save yow that boghte agayn mankynde,
And yow amende!' thus seyde this olde man.
And everich of thise riotoures ran
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of floryns fyne of gold ycoyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thannë after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
That doun they sette hem by this precious hoord.
The worste of hem, he spak the firste word.

'Bretheren,' quod he, 'taak keep what I seye;
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
This tresor hath Fortune unto us yeven,
In myrthe and joliftee oure lyf to lyven;
And lightly as it comth so wol we spende.
Ey, Goddes precious dignitee! who wende
Today that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles unto youres —
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures —
Thanne were we in heigh felicitee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat bee;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for oure owene tresor doon us honge.
This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut with herte blithe
Shal renne to the towne, and that ful swithe,
And brynge us breed and wyn ful privelý;
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresor carie,
By oon assent, where-as us thynketh best.'
That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and looke where it wol falle.
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And al so soonë as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother:
'Thow knowest wel thou art my sworen brother;
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon;
And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us thre;
But nathelees if I kan shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?'

That oother answerde: 'I noot hou that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye.
What shal we doon? what shal we to hym seye?'
'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firste shrewe,
'And I shal tellen in a wordes fewe
What we shal doon and bryngen it wel about?'
'I graunte,' quod that oother, 'out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I shal thee nat biwreye.'
'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye;
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look-whan that he is set, that right anoon
Arys as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye
Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game;
And with thy daggere looke thou do the same.
And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
My deere freend, bitwixen me and thee.
Thanne may we bothe oure lustes all fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille.'
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
This yongeste, which that wente unto the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte.
'O Lord,' quod he, 'if so were that I myghte
Have al this tresor to myself allone,
Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone
Of God that sholde lyve so murye as I!'
And atte laste the feend oure enemy
Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson beye,
With which he myghte sleen hise felawes tweye;
For-why the feend foond hym in swich lyvynge
That he hadde levē hym to sorwe brynge;
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe and nevere to repente.
And forth he gooth — no lenger wolde he tarie —
Into the toun unto a apothecarie,
And preydë hym that he hym wolde selle
Som poyson, that he myghte hise rattes quelle;

And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe
That, as he seyde, hise capons hadde yslawe;
And fayn he wolde wreke hym, if he myghte,
On vermyn that destroyed hym by nyghte.
The pothecarie answerde: 'And thou shalt have
A thyng that, al so God my soule save,
In al this world ther is no creature
That eten or dronken hath of this confiture
Noght but the montance of a corn of whete
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete —
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse while
Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile,
This poyson is so strong and violent.'
This cursed man hath in his hond yhent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
Into the nexte strete unto a man
And borwed of hym large botels thre.
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his owene drynke,
For al the nyght he shoope hym for to swynke
In cariynge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this riotour — with sory grace! —
Hadde filled with wyn hise grete botels thre,
To hise felawes agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?
For right as they hadde cast his deeth bifoore,
Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon
'Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie.'
And with that word it happed hym *par cas*
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drynke also;
For which anon they storven bothe two.
But certes, I suppose that Avycen
Wroot nevere in nó canón nē ín no fen
Mo wonder signes of empoisonyng
Than hadde thise wrecches two er hir endyng.
Thus ended been thise homycides two,

And eek the false empoysonere also.
O cursed synne, of alle cursednesse!
O traytours homycide! O wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Allas, mankyndë! how may it bitide
That to thy creätour, which that the wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas?
Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas!
And ware yow fro the synne of avarice!
Myn hooly pardon may yow alle warice,
So that ye offre nobles, or sterlynges,
Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges.
Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle.
Com up, ye wyves; offreth of youre wolle!
Youre names I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon.
I yow assoille by myn heigh power —
Yow that wol offre — as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born.
And lo, sires, thus I preche.
And Jesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve,
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

But, sires, o word forgat I in my tale:
I have relikes and pardon in my male
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wole, of devocion,
Offren, and han myn absolucion,
Com forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun;
Or elles taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fressh at every miles ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles or pens whiche that be goode and trewe.

It is an honour to everich that is heer
That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures whiche that may bityde.
Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two
Doun of his hors and breke his nekke atwo.
Looke which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in youre felaweshipe yfalle,
That may assoille yow, bothe moore and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede that oure hoost heere shal bigynne,
For he is moost envoluped in synne.
Com forth, sire hoost, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse my relikes everychon —
Ye, for a grote. Unbokele anon thy purs!
'Nay, nay,' quod he 'thanne have I Cristes curs!
Lat be'; quod he, 'it shal nat be, so theech.
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,
And swere it were a relyk of a seint.'
This Pardoner answerde nat a word;
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.
'Now,' quod oure Hoost, 'I wol no lenger pleye
With thee, ne with noon oother angry man.'
But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough:
'Namoore of this, for it is right ynough!
Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere,
And ye, sir Hoost, that been to me so deere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner;
And, Pardoner, I prey thee drawe thee neer,
And as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.'
Anon they kiste, and ryden forth hir weye.

Heere is ended the Pardoners Tale

[FRAGMENT VII (GROUP B²)
THE SHIPMAN'S TALE]

Heere bigynneth the Shipmannes Tale.

[The plot of the Shipman's Tale is similar to that of the first novel of the eighth day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. It involves the swindling of a rich merchant by a monk, through an intrigue of the monk with the merchant's wife.]

Bihoold the murie wordes of the Hoost to the Shipman and to the lady Prioresse.

'Wel seyd, by *corpus dominus!*' quod our Hoost;
'Now longe moote thou saille by the cost,
Sire gentil maister, gentil maryneer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quade yeer!
A ha, felawes! beth ware of swiche a jape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape,
And in his wyves eek, by Seint Austyn.
Draweth no monkes moore unto youre in!
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute
Who shal now telle first of al this route
Another tale.' And with that word, he sayde,
As curteisly as it had ben a mayde:
'My lady Prioresse, by youre leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche sauf, my lady deere?'
'Gladly,' quod she; and seyde as ye shal heere.

Explicit.

The prologe of the Prioresses Tale.

Domine dominus noster.

O Lord oure Lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large world ysprad! — quod she —
For noght oonly thy laude precious

Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is; for on the brest soukynge
Somtyme shewen they thyn heriynge.

Wherfore in laude, as I best kan or may,
Of thee and of the whyte Lylye Flour
Which that the bar and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour —
Nat that I may encreessen hir honour;
For she hirself is honour and the roote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules boote.

O mooder Mayde! O mayde Mooder fre!
O Bussh unbrent, brennynge in Moyses sighte,
That ravysedest doun fro the Deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the Goost that in thalighte;
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceyved was the Fadres sapience —
Helpe me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady, thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humylitee,
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For somtyme, Lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn, of thy benyngnytee,
And getest us the lyght, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us unto thy sone so deere.

My konnyng is so wayk, O blisful Queene,
For to declare thy grete worthynesse
That I ne may the weighte nat susteene;
But as a child of twelf monthe oold or lesse,
That kan unnethë any word expresse,
Right so fare I; and therfore I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

Heere bigynneth the Prioresses Tale.

Ther was in Asye in a greet citee
Amonges Cristene folk, a Jewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vileynye,
Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye;
And thurgh the strete men myghte ride or wende,
For it was free and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heepe, ycomen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich manere doctrine as men used there;
This is to seyn, to syngen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hire childhede.

Among thise children was a wydwes sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone;
And eek also, where-as he saugh thymage
Of Cristes mooder, he hadde in usage,
As hym was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this wydwe hir litel sone ytaught
Oure blisful Lady, Cristes mooder deere
To worshipe ay; and he forgate it naught,
For sely child wol alday soone leere.
But ay whan I remembre on this mateere,
Seint Nicholas stant evere in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist dide reverence.

This litel child his litel book lernynge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde synge,
As children lerned hire antiphoner.
And as he dorste, he drough hym ner and ner,
And herkned ay the wordes and the noote,
Til he the firste vers koude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latyn was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felawe gan he preye
Texpounden hym this song in his langage
Or telle hym why this song was in usage.
This preyde he hym to construe and declare
Ful often tyme upon hise knowes bare.

His felawe, which that elder was than he,
Answerde hym thus: 'This song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of oure blisful Lady free,
Hire to salue, and eek hire for to preye
To been oure help and socour whan we deye.
I kan namoore expounde in this mateere;
I lerne song, I kan but smal grammeere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes mooder?' seyde this innocent.
'Now certes I wol do my diligence
To konne it al er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thries in an houre,
I wol it konne Oure Lady for to honoure.'

His felawe taughte hym homward privelý,
Fro day to day, til he koude it by rote;
And thanne he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acordynge with the note.
Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scole ward and homward whan he wente —
On Cristes mooder set was his entente.

As I have seyd, thurghout the Juërie
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful murily than wolde he synge and crie
O alma Redemptoris everemo.
The swetnesse hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes mooder that, to hire to preye,
He kan nat stynte of syngyng by the weye.

Oure firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Juës herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide: 'O Hebrayk peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thyng that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as hym lest
In youre despit, and synge of swich sentence
Which is agayn oure lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Juës han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace.
An homycidé therto han they hyred,
That in an aleye hadde a privee place.
And as the child gan forby for to pace,
This cursed Jew hym hente and heeld hym faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit hym caste.

O martir sowded to virginitee!
Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon,
The white Lamb celestial —(quod she)—
Of which the grete evaungelist, Seint John,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this Lamb and synge a song al newe,
(That) nevere fleshly wommen they ne knewe.

This poure wydwe awaiteth al that nyght
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as soone as it was dayes lyght,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elleswhere hym soght,
Til finally she gan so fer espie
That he last seyn was in the Juërie.

With moodres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir mynde,
To every place where she hath supposed
By liklihede hir litel child to fynde;
And evere on Cristes mooder meeke and kynde
She cride; and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Juës she hym soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place
To telle hire if hir child wente ought forby.
They seyde 'nay'; but Jesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thoght, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde
Where he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocentz, lo, heere thy myght!
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte ykorven lay upright,
He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to synge
So loude that al the place gan to rynge.

The Cristene folk that thurgh the strete wente
In coomen for to wondre upon this thyng,
And hastily they for the provost sente.
He cam anon withouten tariyng,
And herieth Crist that is of hevene kyng,
And eek his mooder, honour of mankynde;
And after that the Jewes leet he bynde.

This child with pitous lamentacion
Up-taken was, syngynge his song alway;
And with honour of greet procession
They carien hym unto the nexte abbay.
His mooder swownynge by his beere lay;
Unnethe myghte the peple that was theere
This newe Rachel brynge fro his beere.

With torment and with shameful deeth echon,
This provost dooth the Jewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
'Yvele shal he have that yvele wol deserve!'
Therfore with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Upon this beere ay lith this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whil masse laste;
And after that the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien hym ful faste.
And whan they hooly water on hym caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was hooly water,
And song *O alma Redemptoris mater.*

This abbot, which that was an hooly man,
As monkes been — or elles oghte be —
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, 'O deere child, I halsen thee,
In vertu of the Hooly Trinitee:
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge,
Sith that thy throte is kut, to my semynge.'

'My throte is kut unto my nekke boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and as by wey of kynde,
I sholde have dyed, ye, longe tyme agon,
But Jesu Crist, as ye in bookes fynde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in mynde;
And for the worship of his Mooder deere
Yet may I synge *O alma* loude and cleere.

'This welle of mercy, Cristes mooder sweete,
I loved alwey, as after my konnynge,
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to synge
This anthephen verraily in my deyynge,
As ye han herd; and whan that I hadde songe,
Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge.

'Wherfore I synge; and synge I moot, certeyn,
In honour of that blisful Mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn.
And afterward thus seyde she to me:
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee,
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake.
Be nat agast; I wol thee nat forsake."'

This hooly monk — this abbot, hym meene I —
His tonge out caughte, and took awey the greyn;
And he yaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot hadde this wonder seyn,
Hise salte teeris trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf he fil, al plat upon the grounde;
And stille he lay, as he had leyn ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement,
Wepynge, and heryen Cristes mooder deere.
And after that they ryse and forth been went,
And tooken awey this martir from his beere,
And in a temple of marbul stones cleere
Enclosen they his litel body sweete.
Ther he is now, God leve us for to meete!

O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln — slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it is but a litel while ago —
Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplie
For reverence of his mooder, Marie! *Amen*

Heere is ended the Prioresses Tale.

Bihoold the murye wordes of the Hoost to Chaucer.

Whan seyd was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was that wonder was to se,
Til that oure Hoost japen tho bigan;
And thanne at erst he looked upon me,
And seyde thus: 'What man artow?' quod he.
'Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare,
For evere upon the ground I se thee stare.

'Approche neer, and looke up murily.
Now war yow, sires, and lat this man have place!
He in the waast is shape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace

For any womman smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvyssh by his contenance,
For unto no wight dooth he daliance.

'Sey now somwhat, syn oother folk han sayd.
Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon!'
'Hooste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvele apayd,
For oother tale certes kan I noon
But of a rym I lerned longe agoon.'
'Ye, that is good,' quod he. 'Now shul we heere
Som deyntee thyng, me thynketh by his cheere.'

Heere bigynneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas.

[*The First Fit.*]

Listeth, lordes, in good entent.
And I wol telle verrayment
Of myrthe and of solas —
Al of a knyght was fair and gent
In bataille and in tourneyment;
His name was Sire Thopas.

Yborn he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
At Poperyng, in the place.
His fader was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was Goddes grace.

Sire Thopas wax a doghty swayn;
Whit was his face as payndemayn,
Hise lippes rede as rose;
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
And I yow telle in good certayn
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd, was lyk saffroun,
That to his girdel raughte adoun;
Hise shoos of cordewane;

Of Brugges were his hosen broun;
His robe was of syklatoun
That coste many a jane.

He koude hunte at wilde deer,
And ride an haukyng for river
With grey goshauk on honde;
Therto he was a good archeer;
Of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer
Ther any ram shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for hym *paramour*,
Whan hem were bet to slepe;
But he was chaast and no lechour,
And sweete as is the brembul flour
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel upon a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sire Thopas wolde out ride.
He worth upon his steede gray,
And in his hand a launcegay,
A long swerd by his side.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Therinne is many a wilde best —
Ye, bothe bukke and hare.
And as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, hym hadde almest
Bitidde a sory care.

Ther spryngen herbes grete and smale:
The lycorys, and cetewale,
And many a clowe gylofre,
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Wheither it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes synge, it is no nay,
The sparhauk and the papejay,
That joye it was to heere;
The thrustelcok made eek hir lay;
The wodedowve upon a spray,
She sang ful loude and cleere.

Sire Thopas fil in love longynge
Al whan he herde the thrustel synge,
And pryked as he were wood.
His faire steede in his prikynge
So swatte that men myghte him wrynge,
His sydes were al blood.

Sire Thopas eek so wery was
For prikyng on the softe gras —
So fiers was his corage —
That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his steede som solas,
And yaf hym good forage.

'O Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
What eyleth this love at me,
To bynde me so soore?
Me dremed al this nyght, pardee,
An elf queene shal my lemman be
And slepe under my goore.

'An elf queene wol I love, ywis;
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make,
In towne.
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf queene I me take,
By dale and eek by downe.'

Into his sadel he clamb anon,
And priketh over stile and stoon,
An elf queene for tespye,

Til he so longe hadde riden and goon
That he foond in a pryve woon
The contree of Fairye
so wilde —
For in that contree was ther noon
[That to him durste ryde or goon,]
Neither wyf ne childe —

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt —
His name was sire Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede.
He seyde, 'Child, by Termagaunt!
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I sle thy steede
with mace!
Heere is the queene of Fairye,
With harpe, and pipe, and symphonye,
Dwellynge in this place.'

The child seyde, 'Al so moote I thee,
Tomorwe wol I meete with thee
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay!*
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful sowre.
Thy mawe
Shal I percen if I may
Er it be fully pryme of day;
For heere thow shalt be slawe.'

Sire Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This geant at hym stones caste
Out of a fel staf slynge,
But faire escapeth sire Thopas;
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair berynge.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale;
Murier than the nightyngale,
I wol yow rowne

How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Prikyng over hill and dale,
Is comen agayn to towne.

His murie men comanded he
To make hym bothe game and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes three
For *paramour* and jolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

'Do come,' he seyde, 'my mynstrales,
And geestours for to tellen tales,
Anon in myn armynge,
Of romances that been roiales,
Of popes, and of cardinales,
And eek of love-likynge.'

They fette hym first sweete wyn,
And mede eek in a mazelyn,
And roial spicerye,
And gyngebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,
With sugre, that is so trye.

He dide next his white leere,
Of clooth of lake fyn and cleere,
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketon;
And over that an haubergeon,
For percynge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hawberk,
Was al ywroght of Jewes werk —
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour
As whit as is a lilye flour,
In which he wol debate.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed;
And therinne was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;
And there he swoor on ale and breed
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!

Hise jambeux were of quyrboilly;
His swerdes shethe of yvory;
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel boon;
His brydel as the sonne shoon —
Or as the moone light.

His spere it was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre and no thyng pees,
The heed ful sharpe ygrounde.
His steede was al dappull gray;
It gooth an ambil in the way
Ful softely and rounde
In londe.
Loo, lordes myne, heere is a fit.
If ye wol any moore of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now holde youre mouth, *par charitee*,
Bothe knyght and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle!
Of batailles and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speken of romances of prys —
Of Horn Child, and of Ypotys,
Of Beves, and of Sir Gy,
Of Sir Lybeux, and Pleyndamour,
But Sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of roial chivalry.

His goode steede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
As sparcle out of the bronde.
Upon his creest he bar a tour,
And therinne stiked a lilie flour —
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

And for he was a knyght auntrous,
He nolde slepen in noon hous,
But liggen in his hoode.
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by hym baiteth his dextrer
Of herbes fyne and goode.

Hymself drank water of the well,
As dide the knyght sire Percyvell
So worly under wede,
Til on a day —

Heere the Hoost stynteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

'Na moore of this, for Goddes dignitee!'
Quod oure Hooste, 'for thou makest me
So wery of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly God my soule blesse,
Min eres aken of thy drasty speche.
Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod he.
'Why so?' quod I; 'why wiltow lette me
Moore of my tale than another man,
Syn that it is the beste tale I kan?'
'Thou doost noght elles but despendest tyme.
Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.
Lat se wher thou kanst tellen aught in geeste,
Or telle in prose somwhat, at the leeste,
In which ther be som murthe or som doctryne.'
'Gladly,' quod I, 'by Goddes sweete pyne!
I wol yow telle a litel thyng in prose

That oghte liken yow, as I suppose,
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse —
As thus: ye woot that every Evaungelist
That telleth us the peyne of Jesu Crist
Ne seith nat alle thyng as his felawe dooth;
But nathelees hir sentence is al sooth;
And alle acorden as in hire sentence,
Al be ther in hir tellyng difference;
For somme of hem seyn moore, and somme seyn lesse,
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse —
I meene of Mark, Mathew, Luc, and John —
But doutelees hir sentence is all oon.
Therfore, lordynges alle, I yow biseche,
If that yow thynke I varie as in my speche —
As thus: though that I telle somwhat moore
Of proverbes than ye han herd bifoore
Comprehended in this litel tretys heere,
To enforce with theffect of my mateere,
And though I nat the same wordes seye
As ye han herd — yet to yow alle I preye,
Blameth me nat; for as in my sentence
Shul ye nowher fynden difference
Fro the sentence of this tretys lyte
After the which this murye tale I write;
And therfore herkneth what that I shal seye,
And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.

Heere bigynneth Chaucers Tale of Melibee.

A yong man called Melibeus, myghty and riche, bigat upon his wyf, that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie.

[2158] Upon a day bifel that he for his desport is went into the feeldes, hym to pleye. [2159] His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast yshette.

[2160] Thre of hise olde foes han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by wyndowes been entred, [2161] and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places, [2162] this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hire handes, in hir erys, in hir nose, and in hire mouth — and leften hire for deed, and wenten awey.

[2163] Whan Melibeus retourned was into his hous and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rentynge his clothes, gan to wepe and crie.

[2164] Prudence, his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte hym of his wepyng for to stynte; [2165] but nat for-thy he gan to crie and wepen evere lenger the moore.

[2166] This noble wyf Prudence remembred hire upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is *The Remedie of Love*, where-as he seith: [2167] 'He is a fool that destourbeth the mooder to wepen in the deeth of hire child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certein tyme. [2168] And thanne shal man doon his diligence with amyable wordes hire to reconforte, and preyen hire of hir wepyng for to stynte.' [2169] For which reson this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie as for a certein space; [2170] and whan she saugh hir tyme, she seyde hym in this wise: 'Allas, my lord, quod she why make ye youreself for to be lyk a fool? [2171] For sothe it aperteneth nat to a wys man to maken swiche a sorwe. [2172] Youre doghter, with the grace of God, shal warisshe and escape. [2173] And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oughte nat, as for hir deeth, youreself to destroye. [2174] Senek seith: "The wise man shal nat take to greet disconfort for the deeth of his children, [2175] but certes, he sholde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abideth the deeth of his owene propre persone."'

[The discussion between Melibeus and his wife concerning the proper course of action for him to pursue towards his enemies continues for fifty pages more in the editions of the Chaucer Society. Our ancestors were very fond of such discussions, involving as they did much proverbial wisdom, but the modern reader will hardly be interested in more than this specimen.]

The murye wordes of the Hoost to the Monk.

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee
And of Prudence and hire benignytee,
Oure Hooste seyde, 'As I am feithful man,
And by that precious corpus Madrian,
I hadde levere than a barel ale
That Goodelief, my wyf, hadde herd this tale,
For she nys no thyng of swich pacience
As was this Melibeus' wyf Prudence.
By Goddes bones, whan I bete my knaves,
She bryngeth me forth the grete clobbed staves,
And crieth, "Slee the dogges everichoon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon!"
And if that any neighebore of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hire to trespace,
Whan she comth home, she rampeth in my face,
And crieth, "False coward, wrek thy wyf!
By corpus bones, I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spynne!"
Fro day to nyght right thus she wol bigynne.
"Allas," she seith, "that evere that I was shape
To wedden a milksope or a coward ape,
That wol been overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!"
This is my lif but-if that I wol fighte.
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I
Be lik a wilde leon fool-hardy.
I woot wel, she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebore and thanne go my way;
For I am perilous with knyf in honde —
Al be it that I dar hire nat withstonde;
For she is byg in armes, by my feith!
That shal he fynde that hire mysdooth or-seith.
But lat us passe awey fro this mateere.
My lord the Monk,' quod he, 'be myrie of cheere,
For ye shul telle a tale trewely.

Loo, Rouchestre stant heer faste by!
Ryde forth, myn owene lord; brek nat oure game —
But by my trouthe, I knowe nat youre name.
Wher shal I calle yow my lord Daun John,
Or Daun Thomas, or elles Daun Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by youre fader kyn?
I vowe to God, thou hast a ful fair skyn!
It is a gentil pasture ther thow goost;
Thou art nat lyk a penant or a goost.
Upon my feith, thou art som officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer;
For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom;
No poure cloysterer, ne no novys,
But a governour wily and wys;
And therwithal, of brawnes and of bones
A wel-farynge persone for the nones.
I pray to God, yeve hym confusioun
That first thee broghte unto religioun.

. . . . . .

But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye;
"Ful ofte in game a sooth," I have herd seye.'
This worthy Monk took al in pacience,
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
As fer as sowneth into honestee,
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.
And if yow list to herkne hyderward,
I wol yow seyn the lyf of Seint Edward;
Or ellis, first, tragedies wol I telle,
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee
And is yfallen out of heigh degree
Into myserie and endeth wrecchedly.
And they ben versified communely
Of six feet, which men clepen *exametron*.
In prose eek been endited many oon,
And eek in meetre in many a sondry wyse.

Lo, this declaryng oghte ynogh suffise.
Now herkneth, if yow liketh for to heere.
But first I yow biseeke in this mateere,
Though I by ordre telle nat thise thynges,
Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,
After hir ages, as men writen fynde,
But tellen hem som bifore and som bihynde,
As it now comth unto my remembraunce,
Have me excused of min ignoraunce.

Heere bigynneth the Monkes Tale *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium.*

I wol biwaille, in manere of tragèdie,
The harm of hem that stoode in heigh degree
And fillen so that ther nas no remèdie
To brynge hem out of hir adversitee;
For, certein, whan that Fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hire withholde.
Lat no man truste on blynd prosperitee;
Be war of thise ensamples trewe and olde.

[*Lucifer*]

At Lucifer, though he an angel were
And nat a man, at hym wol I bigynne,
For though Fortunè may noon angel dere,
From heigh degree yet fel he for his synne
Doun into helle, where he yet is inne.
O Lucifer, brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that mayst nat twynne
Out of misèrie, in which that thou art falle!

[The monk relates a series of seventeen tragedies ranging in length from seven lines to seventy-seven. The reader will perhaps be satisfied with the first and the last of them.]

[*Cresus*]

This riche Cresus, whilom kyng of Lyde —
Of which Cresus Cirus soore hym dradde —
Yet was he caught amyddes al his pryde,
And to be brent men to the fyr hym ladde;

But swich a reyn doun fro the welkne shadde
That slow the fyr and made hym to escape.
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til Fortune on the galwes made hym gape.

Whanne he escaped was, he kan nat stente
For to bigynne a newe werre agayn.
He wende wel — for that Fortune hym sente
Swich hap that he escaped thurgh the rayn —
That of hise foos he myghte nat be slayn;
And eek a swevene upon a nyght he mette,
Of which he was so proud, and eek so fayn,
That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that hym thoughte,
Ther Juppiter hym wessh, bothe bak and syde;
And Phebus eek a fair towaille hym broughte,
To dryen hym with; and therfore wax his pryde.
And to his doghter, that stood hym bisyde —
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde —
He bad hire telle hym what it signyfyde,
And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde:

'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to meene;
And Juppiter bitokneth snow and reyn;
And Phebus with his towaille so clene,
Tho been the sonne bemes for to seyn.
Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, certeyn;
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye.'
Thus warned hym, ful plat and eek ful pleyn,
His doghter, which that called was Phanye.

An-hanged was Cresus, the proude kyng;
His roial trone myghte hym nat availle.
Tragèdiës noon oother maner thyng
Ne kan in syngyng crie ne biwaille
But that Fortunë alwey wole assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that been proude;
For whan men trusteth hire, thanne wol she faille,
And covere hire brighte face with a clowde.

The prologe of the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

Hoo!' quod the Knyght, 'good sire, namoore of this.
That ye han seyd is right ynough, ywis,
And muchel moore; for litel hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet disese,
Where-as men han been in greet welthe and ese,
To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contrarie is joye and greet solas;
As whan a man hath ben in poure estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And there abideth in prosperitee —
Swich thyng is gladsom, as it thynketh me,
And of swich thyng were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye,' quod oure Hooste, 'by Seint Poules belle,
Ye seye right sooth. This Monk he clappeth lowde.
He spak how Fortune "covered with a clowde" —
I noot nevere what; and also of a tragèdie
Right now ye herde; and, *pardee*, no remèdie
It is for to biwaille ne compleyne
That that is doon; and als it is a peyne,
As ye han seyd, to heere of hevynesse.
'Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse!
Youre tale anoyeth all this compaignye.
Swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye;
For therinne is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfore, sire Monk, or Daun Piers, by youre name,
I pray yow hertely, telle us somwhat elles;
For sikerly nere clynkyng of youre belles,
That on youre bridel hange on every syde,
By hevene Kyng that for us alle dyde,
I sholde er this han fallen doun for sleepe,
Althogh the slough had never been so deepe.
Thanne hadde your talë al be toold in veyn;
For certeinly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
Where-as a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I woot the substance is in me,

If any thyng shal wel reported be.
Sir, sey somwhat of huntyng, I yow preye.'
'Nay,' quod this Monk, 'I have no lust to pleye;
Now lat another telle, as I have toold.'
Thanne spak oure hoost with rude speche and boold,
And seyde unto the Nonnes Preest anon:
'Com neer, thou preest; com hyder, thou sir John!
Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade.
Be blithe, though thou ryde upon a jade.
What thogh thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene.
Looke that thyn herte be murie everemo.'
'Yis, sir,' quod he; 'yis, Hoost, so moot I go;
But I be myrie, ywis, I wol be blamed.'
And right anon his tale he hath attamed;
And thus he seyde unto us everichon,
This sweete preest, this goodly man, sir John.

Heere bigynneth the Nonnes Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote.

A poure wydwe somdel stape in age
Was whilom dwellyng in a narwe cotage
Beside a grove, stondynge in a dale.
This wydwe of which I telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente.
By housbondrie of swich as God hire sente
She foond hirself and eek hire doghtren two.
Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three keen, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a sklendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel;
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir diete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccion ne made hire nevere sik;
Attempree diete was al hir phisik,

A Farmyard and Cottage Interior

From the *Très Riches Heures* of Jehan duc de Berri.

And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hire nothyng for to daunce,
Napoplexíè shente nat hir heed.
No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak —
Milk and broun breed, in which she foond no lak —
Seynd bacon, and somtyme an ey or tweye;
For she was, as it were, a maner deye.
A yeerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dych withoute,
In which she hadde a cok heet Chauntecleer.
In al the land of crowyng nas his peer:
His voys was murier than the murie orgon
On messedayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge
Than is a clokke or an abbey orlogge.
By nature he crew eche ascencioun
Of the equynoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene weren ascended,
Thanne crew he that it myghte nat been amended.
His coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailled as it were a castel wal;
His byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asure were hise legges and his toon;
Hise nayles whiter than the lylye flour;
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were hise sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to hym as of colours;
Of whiche the faireste-hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hyrself so faire,
Syn thilke day that she was seven nyght oold,
That trewely she hath the herte in hoold
Of Chauntecleer, loken in every lith.
He loved hire so that wel was hym therwith.
But swiche a joye was it to here hem synge,

Whan that the brighte sonne bigan to sprynge,
In sweete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe';
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Beestes and briddes koude speke and synge.
And so bifel that in the dawenynge —
As Chauntecleer among hise wyves alle
Sat on his perche that was in the halle,
And next hym sat this faire Pertelote —
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte
As man that in his dreem is drecched soore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde hym roore,
She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte deere,
What eyleth yow to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper! fy! for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief.
By God, me thoughte I was in swich meschief,
Right now, that yet myn herte is soore afright.
'Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,
And kepe my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yeerd, wheer-as I saugh a beest,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areest
Upon my body, and han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelow and reed,
And tipped was his tayl and bothe hise eeris
With blak, unlyk the remenant of hise heeris;
His snowte smal, with glowynge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look, for feere, almoost I deye.
This caused me my gronyng doutelees.'
'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love!
I kan nat love a coward, by my feith;
For certes, what-so any womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it myghte bee,
To han housbondes hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne hym that is agast of every tool,

Ne noon avauntour, by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto youre love,
That anythyng myghte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?
Nothyng, God woot, but vanitee in swevene is.
Swevenes engendren of repleccions,
And ofte of fume and of compleccions,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
Certes, this dreem which ye han met tonyght
Cometh of the greete superfluytee
Of youre rede colera, *pardee*,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyre with rede lemes,
Of grete beestes that they wol hem byte,
Of contekes and of whelpes grete and lyte —
Right as the humour of malencolie
Causeth ful many a man in sleepe to crie
For feere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours koude I telle also
That werken many a man in sleepe ful wo,
But I wol passe as lightly as I kan.
'Lo, Caton, which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus — "Ne do no fors of dremes"?'
'Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan ye flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as taak som laxatyf!
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I conseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shal nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apothecarie,
I shal myself to herbes techen yow
That shul been for youre hele and for youre prow.
And in oure yeerd tho herbes shal I fynde
The whiche han of hire propretee by kynde
To purge yow bynethe and eek above.
Foryet nat this, for Goddes owene love —
Ye been ful coleryk of compleccion.

Ware the sonne in his ascencion
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hoote.
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take youre laxatyves
Of lawriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor that groweth there,
Of katapucë, or of gaitrys beryis
Of herbe yve growyng in oure yeerd, ther mery is.
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem yn!
Be myrie, housbonde, for youre fader kyn;
Dredeth no dreem. I kan sey yow namoore.'
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of youre loore!
But nathelees, as touchyng Daun Catoun,
That hath of wysdom swich a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man moore of auctorite
Than evere Caton was, so moot I thee,
That al the revers seyn of this sentence,
And han wel founden by experience
That dremes been significacions
As wel of joye as of tribulacions
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preeve sheweth it in dede.
'Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus — that whilom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage in a ful good entente,
And happed so they coomen in a toun
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple and eek so streit of herbergage
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe myghte logged bee.
Wherfore they mosten of necessitee,
As for that nyght, departen compaignye.
And ech of hem gooth to his hostelrye,

And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yeerd, with oxen of the plough;
That oother man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
'And so bifel that longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan upon hym calle
And seyde, "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This nyght I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now helpe me, deere brother, or I dye!
In alle haste com to me!" he sayde.
'This man out of his sleepe for feere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakened of his sleepe,
He turned hym and took of it no keepe;
Hym thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twies in his slepyng dremed hee;
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as hym thoughte, and seide, "I am now slawe:
Bihoold my bloody woundes depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,
"A carte ful of donge ther shaltow se,
In which my body is hid ful privelye.
Do thilke carte arresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn."
And tolde hym every point how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
'And truste wel, his dreem he foond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as soone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way,
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answerede hym anon,
And seyde, "Sire, your felawe is agon;
As soone as day he wente out of the toun."
'This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembrynge on hise dremes that he mette,

And forth he gooth — no lenger wolde he lette —
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in that same wise
As ye han herd the dede man devyse.
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeance and justice of this felonye.
"My felawe mordred is this same nyght,
And in this carte heere he lith gapyng upright!
I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
"That sholden kepe and reulen this citee.
Harrow! allas! heere lith my felawe slayn."
'What sholde I moore unto this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the myddel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
'O blisful God, that art so just and trewe,
Lo, howe that thou biwreyest mordre alway!
"Mordre wol out," that se we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhomynable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be,
Though it abyde a yeer or two or thre.
"Mordre wol out," this my conclusioun!
'And right anon ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter and so soore hym pyned,
And eek the hostiler so soore engyned,
That they biknewe hire wikkednesse anon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke bon.
'Heere may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this —
I gabbe nat, so have I joye or blis! —
Two men that wolde han passed over see
For certeyn cause into a fer contree,
If that the wynd ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful myrie upon an haven syde —
But on a day, agayn the even tyde,

The wynd gan chaunge and blew right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad, they wente unto hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille.
'But to that o man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in slepyng as he lay,
Hym mette a wonder dreem agayn the day.
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde
And hym comanded that he sholde abyde,
And seyde hym thus, "If thou tomorwe wende,
Thow shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende."
'He wook and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preydë hym his viagë to lette;
As for that day he preyde hym to byde.
'His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
"No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste
That I wol lette for to do my thynges.
I sette nat a straw by thy dremynges;
For swevenes been but vanytees and japes.
Men dreme al day of owles or of apes,
And of many a maze therwithal;
Men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heere abyde,
And thus forslewthen wilfully thy tyde,
God woot, it reweth me; and have good day!"
'And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde half his cours yseyled —
Noot I nat why, ne what myschaunce it eyled! —
But, casuelly, the shippes botme rente,
And shipe and man under the water wente,
In sighte of othere shippes it bisyde,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfore, faire Pertelote so deere,
By swiche ensamples olde yet maistow leere
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes; for I seye thee doutelees
That many a dreem ful soore is for to drede.
'Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble kyng

Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thyng!
A lite er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avysion he say.
His norice hym expowned every deel
His swevene, and bad hym for to kepe hym weel
For traíson; bút he nás but séven yeer óold,
And therfore litel tale hath he toold
Of any dreem, so hooly was his herte.
By God! I hadde levere than my sherte
That ye hadde rad his legende as have I.
'Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avision
In Affrike of the worthy Cipion,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warnynge of thynges that men after seen.
'And forthermoore, I pray yow, looketh wel
In the Olde Testament, of Daniel,
If he heeld dremes any vanitee.
'Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremés be somtyme — I sey nat alle —
Warnynge of thynges that shul after falle.
'Looke of Egipte the kyng Daun Pharao,
His baker and his butiller also —
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes
May rede of dremes many a wonder thyng.
'Lo, Cresus, which that was of Lyde kyng,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree —
Which signified he sholde anhanged bee?
'Lo, heere Adromacha, Ectores wyf —
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same nyght biforn
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorne
If thilke day he wente into bataille.
She warned hym, but it myghte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte natheles.
But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
'But thilke tale is al to longe to telle,
And eek it is ny day; I may nat dwelle.

Shortly I seye, as for conclusion,
That I shal han of this avision
Adversitee. And I seye forthermoor
That I ne telle of laxatyves no stoor,
For they been venymes, I woot it weel.
I hem diffye; I love hem never a deel!
'Now let us speke of myrthe, and stynte al this.
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thyng God hath sent me large grace!
For whan I se the beautee of youre face,
Ye been so scarlet reed aboute youre eyen,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen,
For, al so siker as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio. —
Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is,
"Womman is mannes joye and al his blis;"
For whan I feele a-nyght your softe syde
(Al be it that I may nat on yow ryde,
For that oure perche is maad so narwe, allas!)
I am so ful of joye and of solas
That I diffye bothe swevene and dreem.'
And with that word, he fly doun fro the beem —
For it was day — and eke hise hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he hadde founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real he was; he was namoore aferd.
He looketh as it were a grym leoun,
And on hise toos he rometh up and doun;
Hym deigned nat to sette his foot to grounde;
He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,
And to hym rennen thanne hise wyves alle.
Thus roial, as a prince is in an halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture,
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the monthe in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God first maked man,
Was compleet, and ypassed were also,
Syn March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer in al his pryde,

Hise sevene wyves walkynge by his syde,
Caste up hise eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne
Twenty degrees and oon and somwhat moore;
And knew by kynde and by noon oother loore
That it was pryme; and crew with blisful stevene.
'The sonne,' he seyde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon and moore, ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they synge!
And se the fresshe floures how they sprynge!
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
But sodeynly hym fil a sorweful cas;
For evere the latter ende of joye is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is soone ago;
And if a rethor koude faire endite,
He in a cronycle saufly myghte it write
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man lat him herkne me:
This storie is al so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.
Now wol I come agayn to my sentence.
A colfox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde wonned yeres three,
By heigh ymaginacion forn-cast,
The same nyght thurghout the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek hise wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay
Til it was passed undren of the day,
Waitynge his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homycides alle
That in await liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrour lurkynge in thy den!
O newe Scariot! newe Genylon!
False dissymulour, O Greek Synon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe

That thou into that yerd flaugh fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forwoot moot nedes bee,
After the opinion of certein clerkis;
Witnesse on hym that any parfit clerk is
That in scóle is greet áltercácion
In this mateere and greet disputison,
And hath been of an hundred thousand men;
But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren,
As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the Bisshope Bradwardyn:
Wheither that Goddes worthy forwityng
Streyneth me nedely to doon a thyng —
('Nedely' clepe I 'symple necessitee' —)
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thyng or do it noght,
Though God forwoot it er that it was wroght;
Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
But by 'necessitee condicioneel.'
I wil nat han to do of swich mateere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,
That took his conseil of his wyf — with sorwe! —
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he hadde met that dreem that I of tolde.
Wommennes conseils been ful ofte colde;
Wommannes conseil broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
Ther-as he was ful myrie and wel at ese.
But for I noot to whom it myght displese
If I conseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seye it in my game.
Rede auctours, where they trete of swich mateere,
And what they seyn of wommen ye may heere.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I kan noon harm of no womman divyne.
Faire in the soond, to bathe hire myrily,
Lith Pertelote, and alle hire sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free

Soong murier than the mermayde in the see —
For Phisiologus seith sikerly
How that they syngen wel and myrily.
And so bifel that as he cast his eye
Among the wortes on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox, that lay ful lowe.
Nothyng ne liste hym thanne for to crowe,
But cride anon 'cok-cok!' and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For natureelly a beest desireth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his eye.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan hym espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me, that am youre freend?
Now certes I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileynye.
I am nat come your conseil for tespye;
But trewely the cause of my comynge
Was oonly for to herkne how that ye synge.
For trewely ye have as myrie a stevene
As any aungel hath that is in hevene,
Therwith ye han in musyk moore feelynge
Than hadde Boece or any that kan synge.
My lord youre fader — God his soule blesse! —
And eek youre mooder, of hire gentillesse,
Han in myn hous ybeen, to my greet ese.
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of syngyng, I wol seye,
So moote I brouke wel myne eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde nevere man so synge
As dide youre fader in the morwenynge.
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the moore strong,
He wolde so peyne hym that with bothe hise eyen
He moste wynke; so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.

And eek he was of swich discrecion
That ther nas no man in no region
That hym in song or wisedom myghte passe.
I have wel rad in *Daun Burnel the Asse*,
Among hise vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf hym a knok
Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce,
He made hym for to lese his benefice.
But certeyn, ther nys no comparison
Bitwixe the wisedom and discrecion
Of youre fader and of his subtiltee.
Now syngeth, sire; for seinte Charitee,
Lat se konne ye youre fader countrefete!'
  This Chauntecleer hise wynges gan to bete,
As man that koude his trayson nat espie,
So was he ravysshed with his flaterie.
  Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in youre courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel moore, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth *Ecclesiaste* of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
  This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
Strecchynge his nekke, and heeld hise eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones.
And Daun Russell the fox stirte up atones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode hym beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that hym sewed.
  O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy servyce dide al his poweer,
Moore for delit than world to multiplye,
Why woltestow suffre hym on thy day to dye?
  O Gaufred, deere maister soverayn,

That whan thy worthy kyng, Richard, was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deeth so soere,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy loore,
The Friday for to chide as diden ye?
For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.
Thanne wolde I shewe yow how that I koude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede and for his peyne.
  Certes, swich cry ne lamentacion
Was nevere of ladyes maad whan Ylion
Was wonne and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd
And slayn hym — as seith us *Eneÿdos* —
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sodeynly dame Pertelote shrighte
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf
Whan that hir housbonde hadde lost his lyf
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage.
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte
And brende hirselven with a stedefast herte.
  O woful hennes, right so criden ye
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves
For that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves —
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wole I turne to my tale agayn.
  This sely wydwe and eek hir doghtres two
Herden thise hennes crie and maken wo;
And out at dores stirten they anon,
And syen the fox toward the grove gon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden 'Out! harrow!' and 'Weylaway!'
'Ha, ha, the fox!' and after hym they ran,
And eek with staves many another man.
Ran Colle oure dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf and eek the verray hogges.
So fered for the berkyng of the dogges

And shoutyng of the men and wommen eke,
They ronne so hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yolleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;
The gees for feere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees.
So hydous was the noyse, a! *benedicitee!*
Certes, he Jakke Straw and his meynee
Ne made nevere shoutes half so shille,
Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they broghten bemes and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and powped;
And therwithal they skriked and they howped;
It semed as that hevene sholde falle.
Now, goode men, I pray yow herkneth alle.
Lo, how Fortune turneth sodeynly
The hope, and pryde eek, of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede unto the fox he spak,
And seyde, 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet wolde I seyn, as wys God helpe me,
"Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
Now am I come unto the wodes syde,
Maugree youre heed, the cok shal heere abyde;
I wol hym ete, in feith, and that anon."'
The fox answerde, 'In feith, it shal be don.'
And as he spak that word, al sodeynly
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,
And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that the cok was gon,
'Allas,' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'ydoon trespas,
Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd
Whan I yow hente and broght out of this yerd.
But, sire, I dide it of no wikke entente.
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so!'

'Nay, thanne,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe two —
And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones —
If thou bigyle me any ofter than ones.
Thou shalt namoore thurgh thy flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke with myn eye;
For he that wynketh whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee!'
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve hym meschaunce
That is so undiscreet of governaunce
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.'
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh thé morálite, goode mén.
For Seint Paul seith that al that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis.
Taketh the fruyt and lat the chaf be stille.
Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle goode men,
And brynge us to his heighe blisse, *Amen!*

Heere is ended the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

[FRAGMENT VIII (GROUP G)

THE SECOND NUN'S TALE]

[The Second Nun's Tale, nicely suited though it is to a nun, seems to have been written long before the *Canterbury Tales* were planned, for in the prologue of *The Legend of Goode Women* the *Lyf of Seint Cecile* is mentioned among the writings of Chaucer's youth. As it is a pretty close translation from the Latin, it is here omitted.]

The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

Whan toold was al the lyf of seinte Cecile,
Er we hadde riden fully fyve mile,
At Boghton under Blee us gan atake
A man that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undernethe he wered a surplys.
His hakeney, which that was al pomely grys,
So swatte that it wonder was to see;
It semed as he had priked miles three.
(The hors eek that his yeman rood upon
So swatte that unnethe myghte it gon.)
A male tweyfoold upon his croper lay;
It semed that he caried lite array;
Al light for somer rood this worthy man.
And in myn herte to wondren I bigan
What that he was, til that I understood
How that his cloke was sowed to his hood;
For which, whan I hadde longe avysed me,
I demed hym som chanon for to be.
His hat heeng at his bak doun by a laas,
For he hadde riden moore than trot or paas;
He hadde ay priked lik as he were wood.
A clote leef he hadde under his hood
For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from heete.
But it was joye for to seen hym swete:

His forheed dropped as a stillatorie
Were ful of plantayne and of paritorie.
And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,
'God save,' quod he, 'this joly compaignye!
Faste have I priked' quod he, 'for youre sake,
Bycause that I wolde yow atake,
To riden in som myrie compaignye.'
His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
And seyde, 'Sires, now in the morwe tyde,
Out of youre hostelrie I saugh you ryde,
And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
Which to ryden with yow is ful fayn
For his desport; he loveth daliance.'
'Freend, for thy warnyng God yeve thee good chance!'
Thanne seyde oure Hoost; 'for certein it wolde seme
Thy lord were wys; and so I may wel deme.
He is ful jocunde also, dar I leye.
Can he oght telle a myrie tale or tweye,
With which he glade may this compaignye?'
'Who, sire? my lord? Ye, ye, withouten lye.
He kan of murthe and eek of jolitee
Nat but ynough. Also, sire, trusteth me,
And ye hym knewë as wel as do I,
Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
He koude werke, and that in sondry wise.
He hath take on hym many a greet emprise
Which were ful hard for any that is heere
To brynge aboute, but they of hym it leere.
As hoomely as he rit amonges yow,
If ye hym knewe it wolde be for youre prow.
Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce
For muchel good, I dar leye in balaunce
Al that I have in my possessioun.
He is a man of heigh discrecioun;
I warne yow wel he is a passyng man.'
'Wel,' quod oure Hoost, 'I pray thee tel me than,
Is he a clerk, or noon? Telle what he is.'
'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, ywis,'
Seyde this Yeman; 'and in wordes fewe,

Hoost, of his craft somwhat I wol yow shewe,
'I seye my lord kan swich subtilitee —
But al his craft ye may nat wite for me,
And somwhat helpe I yet to his wirkyng —
That al this ground on which we been ridyng
Til that we come to Caunterbury toun
He koude al clene turne it up-so-doun,
And pave it al of silver and of gold.'
And whan this Yeman hadde this tale ytold,
Unto oure Hoost, he seyde, '*Benedicitee!*
This thyng is wonder merveillous to me —
Syn that thy lord is of so heigh prudence
Bycause of which men sholde hym reverence —
That of his worshipe rekketh he so lite.
His overslope nys nat worth a myte
As in effect to hym, so moot I go;
It is al baudy and to-tore also.
Why is thy lord so sluttissh, I the preye,
And is of power bettre clooth to beye,
If that his dede accorde with thy speche?
Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.'
'Why,' quod this Yeman, 'wherto axe ye me?
God help me so, for he shal nevere thee.
But I wol nat avowe that I seye;
And therfore keepe it secree, I yow preye.
He is to wys, in feith, as I bileeve.
That that is overdoon, it wol nat preeve
Aright; as clerkes seyn, it is a vice;
Wherfore in that I holde hym lewed and nyce.
For whan a man hath over greet a wit,
Ful oft hym happeth to mysusen it.
So dooth my lord, and that me greveth soore;
God it amende! I kan sey yow namoore.'
'Therof no fors, good Yeman,' quod oure Hoost.
'Syn of the konnyng of thy lord thow woost,
Telle how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,
Syn that he is so crafty and so sly.
Where dwelle ye? if it to telle be.'
'In the suburbes of a toun,' quod he,

'Lurkynge in hernes and in lanes blynde,
Where-as thise robbours and thise theves, by kynde,
Holden hir pryvee, fereful residence;
As they that dar nat shewen hir presence,
So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe.'
'Now,' quod oure Hooste, 'lat me talke to the —
Why artow so discoloured of thy face?'
'Peter!' quod he; 'God yeve it harde grace!
I am so used in the fyr to blowe
That it hath chaunged my colour, I trowe.
I am nat wont in no mirour to prie,
But swynke soore and lerne multiplie.
We blondren evere and pouren in the fir;
And for al that, we faille of oure desir;
For evere we lakke of oure conclusion.
To muchel folk we doon illusion,
And borwe gold — be it a pound or two,
Or ten, or twelve, or manye sommes mo —
And make hem wenen at the leeste weye
That of a pound we koude make tweye.
Yet is it fals. But ay we han good hope
It for to doon; and after it we grope.
But that science is so fer us biforn
We mowen nat, although we hadden sworn,
It overtake; it slit awey so faste
It wole us maken beggers atte laste.'
Whil this Yeman was thus in his talkyng,
This Chanon drough hym neer and herde al thyng
Which this Yeman spak; for suspecion
Of mennes speche evere hadde this Chanon.
For Caton seith that he that gilty is
Demeth alle thyng be spoke of hym, ywis.
That was the cause he gan so ny hym drawe
To his Yeman, to herknen al his sawe.
And thus he seyde unto his Yeman tho:
'Hoold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes mo;
For if thou do, thou shalt it deere abye!
Thou sclaundrest me heere in this compaignye,
And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde.'

'Ye,' quod our Hoost; 'telle on what so bityde!
Of al his thretyng rekke nat a myte.'
'In feith,' quod he, 'namoore I do, but lyte.'
And whan this Chanon saugh it wolde nat be,
But his Yeman wolde telle his pryvetee,
He fledde awey for verray sorwe and shame.
'A,' quod the Yeman, 'heere shal arise game!
Al that I kan anon now wol I telle,
Syn he is goon — the foule feend hym quelle!
For nevere heerafter wol I with hym meete,
For peny ne for pound, I yow biheete.
He that me broghte first unto that game,
Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame!
For it is ernest to me, by my feith;
That feele I wel, what that any man seith.
And yet for al my smert and al my grief,
For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
I koude nevere leve it, in no wise.
Now wolde God my wit myghte suffise
To tellen al that longeth to that art!
And nathelees, yow wol I tellen part.
Syn that my lord is goon, I wol nat spare;
Swich thyng as that I knowe I wol declare.

Heere endeth the prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

Heere bigynneth the Chanons Yeman his Tale.

With this Chanon I dwelt have seven yeer,
And of his science am I never the neer.
Al that I haddë I have lost therby;
And God woot, so hath many mo than I.
Ther I was wont to be right fressh and gay
Of clothyng, and of oother good array,
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;
And wher my colour was bothe fressh and reed,
Now is it wan and of a leden hewe.
Whoso it useth, soore shal he rewe.
And of my swynk yet blered is myn eye;
Lo, which avantage is to multiplie!

That slidynge science hath me maad so bare
That I have no good, wher-that-evere I fare,
And yet I am endetted so therby
Of gold that I have borwed trewely
That whil I lyve I shal it quite nevere.
Lat every man be war by me forevere.
What maner man that casteth hym therto,
If he continue, I holde his thrift ydo;
For so helpe me God, therby shal he nat wynne,
But empte his purs, and make hise wittes thynne.
And whan he, thurgh his madnesse and folye,
Hath lost his owene good thurgh jupartye,
Thanne he exciteth oother folk therto,
To lesen hir good, as he hym self hath do.
For unto shrewes joye it is and ese
To have hir felawes in peyne and disese.
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk —
Of that no charge; I wol speke of oure werk.
Whan we been there as we shul excercise
Oure elvysshe craft, we semen wonder wise,
Oure termes been so clergial and so queynte;
I blowe the fir til that myn herte feynte.
What sholde I tellen eche proporcion
Of thynges whiche that we werche upon —
As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be,
Of silver, or som oother quantitee —
And bisye me to telle yow the names
Of orpyment, brent bones, iren squames,
That into poudre grounden been ful smal;
And in an erthen pot how put is al,
And salt yput in, and also papeer,
Biforn thise poudres that I speke of heer;
And wel ycovered with a lampe of glas;
And muchel oother thyng which that ther was;
And of the pot and glasses enlutyng,
That of the eyr myghte passe out nothyng;
And of the esy fir, and smart also,
Which that was maad; and of the care and wo
That we hadden in oure matires sublymyng,

And in amalgamyng and calcenyng
Of quyksilver, yclept mercurie crude?
For alle our sleightes, we kan nat conclude.
Oure orpyment, and sublymed mercurie,
Oure grounden litarge eek on the porfurie,
And ech of thise of ounces a certeyn —
Noght helpeth us; oure labour is in veyn;
Ne eek oure spirites ascencioun,
Ne oure matires that lyen al fix adoun,
Mowe in oure werkyng nothyng us availle,
For lost is al oure labour and travaille;
And al the cost — a twenty devel way! —
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.
  Ther is also ful many another thyng
That is unto oure craft apertenyng,
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce kan,
Bycause that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to mynde,
Thogh I ne kan nat sette hem in hir kynde:
As boole armonyak, verdegrees, boras;
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas —
Oure urynals, and our descensories,
Violes, crosletz, and sublymatories,
Cucurbites, and alambikes eek,
And othere swiche, deere ynough a leek!
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle;
Watres rubifiyng, and boles galle,
Arsenyk, sal armonyak, and brymstoon;
And herbes koude I telle eek many oon,
As egremoyne, valerian, and lunarie,
And othere swiche, if that me liste tarie;
Oure lampes brennyng bothe nyght and day,
To brynge aboute oure purpos, if we may;
Oure fourneys eek of calcinacion
And of watres albificacion;
Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,
Poudres diverse, asshes, donge, pisse, and cley;
Cered pottes, sal-peter, vitriole;
And diverse fires maad of wode and cole;

Sal-tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat;
And combust matires and coagulat;
Cley maad with hors and mannes heer; and oille
Of tartre, alum glas, berme, wort, and argoille,
Resalgar; and oure matires enbibyng;
And eek of oure matires encorporyng;
And of oure silver citrinacion;
Oure cementyng and fermentacion;
Oure yngottes, testes, and many mo.
I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,
The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
By ordre as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene.
The firste spirit quyksilver called is;
The seconde orpyment; the thridde, ywis,
Sal armonyak; and the ferthe brymstoon.
The bodyes sevene eek, lo, hem heere anoon:
Sol gold is; and Luna, silver, we threpe;
Mars, iren; Mercurie quyksilver we clepe;
Saturnus, leed; and Juppiter is tyn;
And Venus, coper, by my fader kyn.
This cursed craft whoso wole excercise,
He shal no good han that hym may suffise;
For al the good he spendeth theraboute
He lese shal, therof have I no doute.
Who that listeth outen his folie,
Lat hym come forth and lerne multiplie.
And every man that oght hath in his cofre,
Lat hym appiere and wexe a philosophre.
Ascaunses that craft is so light to leere?
Nay, nay, God woot, al be he monk or frere,
Preest, or chanon, or any oother wyght,
Though he sitte at his book bothe day and nyght,
In lernyng of this eluysshe, nyce loore,
Al is in veyn; and *parde* muchel moore.
To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee —
Fy! spek nat therof, for it wol nat bee.
And konne he letterure, or konne he noon,
As in effect, he shal fynde it al oon;
For bothe two, by my savacion,

Concluden in multiplicacion
Ylike wel, whan they han al ydo;
This is to seyn, they faillen bothe two.
Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille
Of watres corosif, and of lymaille,
And of bodies mollificacion,
And also of hire induracion.
Oilles, ablucions, and metal fusible —
To tellen al wolde passen any Bible
That owher is; wherfore, as for the beste,
Of alle thise names now wol I me reste;
For as I trowe, I have yow toold ynowe
To reyse a feend, al looke he never so rowe.
A, nay! lat be! the Philosophres Stoon,
Elixer clept, we sechen faste echoon;
For hadde we hym, thanne were it siker ynow.
But unto God of hevene I make avow,
For al oure craft, whan we han al ydo,
With al oure sleighte, he wol nat come us to.
He hath ymaad us spenden muchel good;
For sorwe of which almoost we wexen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in oure herte,
Supposynge evere, though we sore smerte,
To be releeved by hym afterward.
Swich supposyng and hope is sharpe and hard;
I warne yow wel, it is to seken evere;
That *futur temps* hath maad men to dissevere,
In trust therof, from al that evere they hadde.
Yet of that art they kan nat wexen sadde;
For unto hem it is a bitter-sweete,
So semeth it; for nadde they but a sheete
Which that they myghte wrappe hem inne at nyght
And a brat to walken inne by daylyght,
They wolde hem selle and spenden on the craft;
They kan nat stynte til nothyng be laft.
And everemoore, where that evere they goon,
Men may hem knowe by smel of brymstoon.
For al the world, they stynken as a goot;
Hir savour is so rammyssh and so hoot

That, though a man a mile from hem be,
The savour wole infecte hym, truste me.
And thus by smel and by threedbare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man wole aske hem pryvely
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rownen in his ere
And seyn that if that they espied were,
Men wolde hem slee bycause of hir science.
Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!
  Passe over this! I go my tale unto.
Er that the pot be on the fir ydo
Of metals with a certeyn quantitee,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he —
Now he is goon, I dare seyn boldely —
For as men seyn, he kan doon craftily;
Algate, I woot wel he hath swich a name;
And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame.
And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,
The pot tobreketh, and farewel, al is go!
Thise metals been of so greet violence
Oure walles mowe nat make hem resistence,
But-if they weren wroght of lym and stoon,
They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon.
And somme of hem synken into the ground;
Thus han we lost by tymes many a pound.
And somme are scatered al the floor aboute;
Somme lepe into the roof — withouten doute,
Though that the feend noght in oure sighte hym shewe,
I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!
In helle, where that he lord is and sire,
Nis ther moore wo, ne moore rancour, ne ire.
Whan that oure pot is broke, as I have sayd,
Every man chit and halt hym yvele apayd.
  Somme seyde it was along on the fir makyng;
Somme seyde nay, it was on the blowyng.
Thanne was I fered, for that was myn office.
  'Straw!' quod the thridde; 'ye been lewed and nyce;
It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'

'Nay,' quod the fourthe, 'stynt and herkne me:
Bycause our fir ne was nat maad of beech,
That is the cause, and oother noon, so theech!'
I kan nat telle wheron it was along,
But wel I woot greet strif us is among.
'What!' quod my lord, 'ther is namoore to doone.
Of thise perils I wol be war eftsoone.
I am right siker that the pot was crased.
Be as be may, be ye nothyng amased;
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swithe.
Plukke up youre hertes, and beeth glad and blithe!'
The mullok on an heepe sweped was;
And on the floor ycast a canevas;
And al this mullok in a syve ythrowe,
And sifted, and ypiked many a throwe.
'*Pardee!*' quod oon, 'somwhat of oure metal
Yet is ther heere, though that we han nat al.
Although this thyng myshapped have as now,
Another tyme it may be wel ynow.
Us moste putte oure good in aventure.
A marchant, *pardee*, may nat ay endure,
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;
Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,
And somtyme comth it sauf unto the londe.'
'Pees!' quod my lord; 'the nexte tyme I shal fonde
To bryngen oure craft al in another plite;
And but I do, sires, lat me han the wite.
Ther was defaute in somwhat, wel I woot.'
Another seyde the fir was over hoot.
And be it hoot or coold, I dar seye this —
That we concluden everemoore amys.
We faille of that which that we wolden have,
And in oure madnesse everemoore we rave.
And whan we been togidres everichoon,
Every man semeth a Salomon.
But al thyng which that shineth as the gold
Nis nat gold as that I have herd it told;
Ne every appul that is fair to eye
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye.

Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us.
He that semeth the wiseste, by Jesus,
Is moost fool whan it cometh to the preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a theef.
That shul ye knowe er that I fro yow wende,
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

Explicit prima pars. *Et sequitur pars secunda.*

Ther was a chanon of religioun
Amonges us wolde infecte al a toun,
Thogh it as greet were as was Nynyvee,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three.
His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse
Ther koude no man writen, as I gesse,
Though that he lyve myghte a thousand yeer.
In al this world of falshede nas his peer;
For in hise termes so he wolde hym wynde,
And speke hise wordes in so sly a kynde,
Whanne he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make hym doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as hymselven is.
Ful many a man hath he bigiled er this;
And wole, if that he lyve may a while.
And yet men ride and goon ful many a mile
Hym for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,
Noght knowynge of his false governaunce.
And if yow list to yeve me audience,
I wol it telle heere in youre presence.
But worshipful chanons religious,
Ne demeth nat that I desclaundre youre hous,
Although that my tale of a chanoun bee.
Of every ordre som shrewe is, *pardee;*
And God forbede that al a compaignye
Sholde rewe o singuleer mannes folye.
To sclaundre yow is nothyng myn entente,
But to correcten that is mys I mente.
This tale was nat oonly toold for yow,
But eek for othere mo. Ye woot wel how

That among Cristes apostles twelve
Ther nas no traytour but Judas hymselve.
Thanne why sholde al the remenant have a blame,
That giltlees were? By yow I seye the same —
Save oonly this, if ye wol herkne me:
If any Judas in youre covent be,
Remoeveth hym bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede;
And beeth no thyng displesed, I yow preye,
But in this cas herketh what I shal seye.
In London was a preest annueleer,
That therinne hadde dwelled many a yeer;
Which was so plesaunt and so servysable
Unto the wyf where-as he was at table
That she wolde suffre hym nothyng for to paye
For bord ne clothyng, wente he never so gaye;
And spendyng silver hadde he right ynow.
Therof no fors; I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanon
That broghte this preest to confusion.
This false chanon cam upon a day
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay,
Bisechynge hym to lene hym a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quite it hym ageyn.
'Leene me a marc,' quod he, 'but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quiten thee.
And if so be that thow me fynde fals,
Another day do hange me by the hals!'
This preest hym took a marc, and that as swithe.
And this chanoun hym thanked ofte sithe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his weye;
And at the thridde day broghte his moneye,
And to the preest he took his gold agayn;
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fayn.
'Certes,' quod he, 'nothyng anoyeth me
To lene a man a noble, or two or thre,
Or what thyng were in my possession,
Whan he so trewe is of condicion
That in no wise he breke wole his day;

To swich a man I kan never seye nay.'
'What,' quod this chanoun, 'sholde I be untrewe?
Nay, that were thyng yfallen al of newe.
Trouthe is a thyng that I wol evere kepe
Into that day in which that I shal crepe
Into my grave, or ellis God forbede!
Bileveth this as siker as the Crede.
God thanke I — and in good tyme be it sayd —
That ther was nevere man yet yvele apayd
For gold ne silver that he to me lente;
Ne nevere falshede in myn herte I mente.
And sire,' quod he, 'now of my pryvetee,
Syn ye so goodlich han been unto me,
And kithed to me so greet gentillesse,
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndenesse
I wol yow shewe, if that yow list to leere.
I wol yow teche pleynly the manere
How I kan werken in philosophie.
Taketh good heede; ye shul wel seen at eye
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.'
'Ye,' quod the preest; 'ye, sire, and wol ye so?
Marie, therof I pray yow hertely.'
'At youre comandement, sire, trewely,'
Quod the chanon, 'and ellis God forbeede.'
Loo, how this theef koude his service beede!
Ful sooth it is that swich profred servyse
Stynketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse;
And that ful soone I wol it verifie
In this chanon, roote of alle trecherie,
That everemoore delit hath and gladnesse —
Swiche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse —
How Cristes peple he may to meschief brynge.
God kepe us from his false dissymulynge!
Noght wiste this preest with whom that he delte,
Ne of his harm comynge he no thyng felte.
O sely preest! O sely innocent,
With coveitise anon thou shalt be blent!
O gracelees, ful blynd is thy conceite;
Nothyng ne artow war of the deceite

Which that this fox yshapen hath for thee.
Hise wily wrenches thou ne mayst nat flee.
Wherfore, to go to the conclusion,
That refereth to thy confusion,
Unhappy man, anon I wol me hye
To tellen thyn unwit and hie folye,
And eek the falsnesse of that oother wrecche,
As ferforth as my konnyng may strecche.
This chanon was my lord, ye wolden weene?
Sire Hoost, in feith, and by the hevenes queene,
It was another chanon, and nat hee,
That kan an hundred foold moore subtiltee.
He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;
Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme.
Evere whan that I speke of his falshede,
For shame of hym my chekes wexen rede —
Algates they bigynnen for to glowe,
For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage; for fumes diverse
Of metals, whiche ye han herd me reherce,
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.
Now taak heede of this chanons cursednesse!
'Sire,' quod he to the preest, 'lat youre man gon
For quyksilver, that we hadde it anon,
And lat hym bryngen ounces two or three;
And whan he comth, as faste shal ye see
A wonder thyng, which ye saugh nevere er this.'
'Sire,' quod the preest, 'it shal be doon ywis.'
He bad his servant fecchen hym this thyng;
And he al redy was at his biddyng,
And wente hym forth, and cam anon agayn
With this quyksilver, soothly for to sayn,
And toke thise ounces thre to the chanoun.
And he hem leyde faire and wel adoun,
And bad the servant coles for to brynge,
That he anon myghte go to his werkynge.
The coles right anon weren yfet;
And this chanon took out a crosselet
Of his bosom, and shewed it to the preest.

'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that thou seest,
Taake in thyn hand, and put thyself therinne
Of this quyksilver an ounce and heer bigynne,
In the name of Crist, to wexe a philosofre!
Ther been ful fewe to whiche I wolde profre
To shewen hem thus muche of my science.
For ye shul seen heer by experience
That this quyksilver wol I mortifye
Right in youre sighte anon, I wol nat lye,
And maken as good silver and as fyn
As ther is any in youre purse or myn,
Or elleswhere, and make it malliable,
And elles holdeth me fals and unable
Amonges folk forevere to appeere.
I have a poudre heer that coste me deere
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al
My konnyng which I to yow shewen shal.
Voyde youre man, and lat hym be ther-oute;
And shette the dore, whils we been aboute
Oure pryvetee, that no man us espie,
Whils that we werke in this philosophie.'
Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede.
This ilke servant anon right out-yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to hire labour spedily they gon.
This preest at this cursed chanons biddyng
Upon the fir anon sette this thyng,
And blew the fir, and bisyed hym ful faste.
And this chanon into the crosselet caste
A poudre, noot I wherof that it was
Ymaad — outher of chalk, outher of glas,
Or somwhat elles was nat worth a flye —
To blynde with the preest, and bad hym hye
The coles for to couchen al above
The crosselet. 'For in tokenyng I thee love,'
Quod this chanon, 'thyne owene handes two
Shul werchen al thyng which shal heer be do.'
'*Graunt mercy*,' quod the preest, and was ful glad;
And couched coles, as that the chanon bad.

And while he bisy was, this feendly wrecche —
This false chanoun, the foule feend hym fecche! —
Out of his bosom he took a bechen cole,
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
And therinne put was of silver lemaille
An ounce, and stopped was, withouten faille,
The hole with wex, to kepe the lemaille in.
And understondeth that this false gyn
Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore;
And othere thynges I shal tellen moore
Herafterward, whiche that he with hym broghte.
Er he cam there, hym to bigile he thoghte;
And so he dide er that they wente atwynne;
Til he had terved hym he koude nat blynne.
It dulleth me, whan that I of hym speke;
On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke,
If I wiste how; but he is heere and there,
He is so variaunt that he abit nowhere.
  But taketh heede now, sires, for Goddes love!
He took this cole of which I spak above,
And in his hand he baar it pryvely,
And whils the preest couchede bisily
The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
This chanon seyde, 'Freend, ye doon amys;
This is nat couched as it oghte be.
But soone I shal amenden it,' quod he.
'Now lat me medle therwith but a while,
For of yow have I pitee, by Seint Gile.
Ye been right hoot. I se wel how ye swete.
Have heer a clooth, and wipe awey the wete.'
And whiles that the preest wiped his face,
This chanon took his cole — with harde grace! —
And leyde it above, upon the myddeward
Of the crosselet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
  'Now yeve us drynke!' quod the chanon thenne;
'As swithe al shal be wel, I undertake.
Sitte we doun, and lat us myrie make.'
  And whan that this chanones bechen cole

Was brent, al the lemaille out of the hole
Into the crosselet fil anon adoun;
And so it moste nedes, by resoun,
Syn it so evene aboven it couched was.
But therof wiste the preest nothyng, alas!
He demed alle the coles yliche good;
For of that sleighte he nothyng understood.
And whan this alkamystre saugh his tyme,
'Ris up,' quod he, 'sire preest, and stonde by me;
And, for I woot wel ingot have I noon,
Gooth walketh forth and brynge us a chalk stoon;
For I wol make oon of the same shap
That is an ingot, if I may han hap.
And bryngeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne
Ful of water, and ye shul se wel thanne
How that oure bisynesse shal thryve and preeve.
And yet for ye shul han no mysbileeve
Ne wrong conceite of me in youre absence,
I ne wol nat been out of youre presence,
But go with yow and come with yow ageyn.'
The chambre dore, shortly for to seyn,
They opened and shette, and wente hir weye;
And forth with hem they carieden the keye;
And coome agayn withouten any delay.
What sholde I tarien al the longe day?
He took the chalk and shoope it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.
I seye he took out of his owene sleeve
A teyne of silver — yvele moot he cheeve! —
Which that was nat but an ounce of weighte.
And taaketh heede now of his cursed sleighte!
He shoope his ingot in lengthe and eek in breede
Of this teyne, withouten any drede,
So slyly that the preest it nat espide;
And in his sleve agayn he gan it hide,
And fro the fir he took up his mateere
And in thyngot putte it, with myrie cheere,
And in the water vessel he it caste,
Whan that hym luste, and bad the preest as faste:

'What that heer is, put in thin hand and grope.
Thow fynde shalt ther silver as I hope.'
He putte his hand in and took up a teyne
Of silver fyn. And glad in every veyne
Was this preest, whan he saugh it was so.
'Góddes blessyng, and his móodres also,
And alle halwes, have ye sire chanon,'
Seyde this preest, 'and I hir malison!
But and ye vouchesauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtiltee,
I wol be youre in al that evere I may!'
Quod the chanon, 'Yet wol I make assay
The seconde tyme, that ye may taken heede
And been expert of this, and in youre neede
Another day assaye in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science.
Lat take another ounce,' quod he tho,
'Of quyksilver, withouten wordes mo,
And do therwith as ye han doon er this
With that oother, which that now silver is.'
This preest hym bisieth in al that he kan
To doon as this chanon, this cursed man,
Comanded hym; and faste he blew the fir,
For to come to theffect of his desir.
And this chanon right in the meene while
Al redy was the preest eft to bigile.
And for a contenance in his hand he bar
An holwe stikke — taak kepe and be war! —
In the ende of which an ouncë, and namoore,
Of silver lemaille put was as bifore
In his cóle, and stopped with wex weel,
For to kepe in his lemaille every deel.
And whil this preest was in his bisynesse,
This chanon with his stikke gan hym dresse
To hym anon, and his poudre caste in,
As he dide er — the devel out of his skyn
Hym terve, I pray to God, for his falshede!
For he was evere fals in thoght and dede.
And with this stikke above the crosselet,

That was ordeyned with that false jet,
He stired the coles til relente gan
The wex agayn the fir, as every man,
But it a fool be, woot wel it moot nede,
And al that in the stikke was out-yede
And in the crosselet hastily it fel.
  Now, goode sires, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest thus was bigiled ageyn,
Supposynge noght but treuthe, sooth to seyn,
He was so glad that I ne kan nat expresse
In no manere his myrthe and his gladnesse.
And to the chanon he profred eftsoone
Body and good. 'Ye,' quod the chanon soone,
'Though poure I be, crafty thou shalt me fynde;
I warne thee yet is ther moore bihynde.
  'Is ther any coper herinne?' seyde he.
  'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sire, I trowe wel ther be.'
  'Elles go bye us som, and that as swithe.
Now, goode sire, go forth thy wey and hy the!'
  He wente his wey, and with the coper cam.
And this chanon it in hise handes nam,
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.
  Al to symple is my tonge to pronounce,
As ministre of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanon, roote of alle cursednesse.
He semed freendly to hem that knewe hym noght,
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thoght.
It weerieth me to telle of his falsnesse;
And nathelees yet wol I it expresse
To thentente that men may be war therby,
And for noon oother cause trewely.
  He putte the ounce of coper in the crosselet,
And on the fir as swithe he hath it set,
And caste in poudre; and made the preest to blowe,
And in his werkyng for to stoupe lowe,
As he dide er. And al nas but a jape.
Right as hym liste, the preest he made his ape.
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it at the laste

Of the water. In he putte his owene hand;
And in his sleve, as ye biforenhand
Herde me telle, hadde a silver teyne.
He slyly tooke it out, this cursed heyne,
Unwityng this preest of his false craft,
And in the pannes botme he hath it laft;
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder pryvely took up also
The coper teyne, noght knowynge this preest,
And hidde it, and hym hente by the breest,
And to hym spak, and thus seyde in his game,
'Stoupeth adoun! by God ye be to blame!
Helpeth me now as I dide yow whil-eer!
Putte in youre hand, and looketh what is theer.'
This preest took up this silver teyne anon;
And thanne seyde the chanon, 'Lat us gon
With thise thre teynes whiche that we han wroght
To som goldsmyth, and wite if they been ouht.
For by my feith, I nolde for myn hood
But if that they were silver fyn and good;
And that as swithe preeved it shal bee.'
Unto the goldsmyth with thise teynes three
They wente, and putte thise teynes in assay
To fir and hamer. Myghte no man seye nay
But that they weren as hem oghte be.
This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was nevere brid gladder agayn the day,
Ne nyghtyngale in the seson of May.
Nas nevere man that luste bet to synge,
Ne lady lustier in carolynge,
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede;
Ne knyght in armes to doon an hardy dede,
To stonden in gracë of his lady deere,
Than hadde this preest this soory craft to leere.
And to the chanon thus he spak and seyde:
'For love of God, that for us alle deyde,
And as I may deserve it unto yow,
What shal this receite coste? telleth now.'
'By oure Lady,' quod this chanon, 'it is deere,

I warne yow wel, for save I and a frere,
In Engelond ther kan no man it make.'
'No fors,' quod he; 'now, sire, for Goddes sake,
What shal I paye? telleth me, I preye.'
'Ywis,' quod he, 'it is ful deere, I seye.
Sire, at o word, if that thee list it have,
Ye shul paye fourty pound, so God me save;
And nere the freendshipe that ye dide er this
To me, ye sholde paye moore, ywis.'
This preest the somme of fourty pound anon
Of nobles fette, and took hem everichon
To this chanon for this ilke receit.
Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceit.
'Sire preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos
Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos.
And as ye love me, kepeth it secree;
For and men knewen al my soutiltee,
By God they wolden han so greet envye
To me bycause of my philosophye
I sholde be deed; ther were noon oother weye.'
'God it forbeede,' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?
Yet hadde I levere spenden al the good
Which that I have, or elles wexe I wood,
Than that ye sholden falle in swiche mescheef.'
'For youre good wyl, sire, have ye right good preef,'
Quod the chanon. 'And farwel, *grant mercy!*'
He wente his wey, and never the preest hym sy
After that day. And whan that this preest shoolde
Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde,
Of this receit, farwel, it wolde nat be!
Lo, thus byjaped and bigiled was he.
Thus maketh he his introduccion,
To brynge folk to hir destruccion.
Considereth, sires, how that in ech estaat
Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat
So ferforth, that unnethë is ther noon.
This multiplying blent so many oon
That, in good feith, I trowe that it bee
The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.

Philosophres speken so mystily
In this craft that men kan nat come therby,
For any wit that men han nowadayes.
They mowe wel chiteren, as that doon jayes,
And in hir termes sette hir lust and peyne,
But to hir purpos shul they nevere atteyne.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
To multiplie and brynge his good to naught.
Lo, swich a lucre is in this lusty game
A mannes myrthe it wol turne unto grame,
And empten also grete and hevye purses,
And maken folk for to purchacen curses
Of hem that han hir good therto ylent.
O fy for shame, they that han been brent,
Allas, kan they nat flee the fires heete?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it leete
Lest ye lese al, for bet than nevere is late.
Nevere to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it nevere fynde.
Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blynde,
That blondreth forth and peril casteth noon.
He is as boold to renne agayn a stoon
As for to goon bisides in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
If that youre eyen kan nat seen aright,
Looke that youre mynde lakke noght his sight;
For though ye looken never so brode and stare,
Ye shul nothyng wynne on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdraweth the fir, lest it to faste brenne.
Medleth namoore with that art, I mene;
For if ye doon, youre thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as swithe I wol yow tellen heere
What that the philosophres seyn in this mateere.
Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencioun.
He seith right thus, withouten any lye:
'Ther may no man mercurie mortifie
But it be with his brother knowlechyng.'

How that he, which that first seyde this thyng
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes —
He seith how that the dragon doutelees
Ne dyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragon mercurie and noon oother
He understood, and brymstoon by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe.
'And therfore,' seyde he — taak heede to my sawe! —
'Lat no man bisye hym this art for to seche,
But-if that he thentencion and speche
Of philosophres understonde kan.
And if he do, he is a lewed man;
For this science and this konnyng,' quod he,
'Is of the secree of secrees, *pardee!*'
  Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book *Senior* wol bere witnesse;
And this was his demande, in soothfastnesse:
'Telle me the namë of the privee stoon.'
  And Plato answerde unto hym anoon,
'Take the stoon that *Titanos* men name.'
  'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnasia is the same,'
Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sire, and is it thus?
This is *ignotum per ignocius*.
What is Magnasia, good sire, I yow preye?'
  'It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato.
  'Telle me the roote, good sire,' quod he tho,
Of that water, if it be youre wille.'
  'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certein, that I nylle.
The philosophres sworn were everychoon
That they sholden discovere it unto noon,
Nē in no book it write, in no manere;
For unto Crist it is so lief and deere
That he wol nat that it discovered bee
But where it liketh to his deitee
Man for tenspire, and eek for to deffende
Whom that hym liketh; lo, this is the ende.'

Thanne conclude I thus: sith that God of hevene
Ne wil nat that the philosophres nevene
How that a man shal come unto this stoon,
I rede us for thé beste lete it goon;
For whoso maketh God his adversarie,
As for to werken anythyng in contrarie
Of his wil, certes never shal he thryve,
Thogh that he multiplie terme of lyve.
And there a poynt; for ended is my tale.
God sende every trewe man boote of his bale! *Amen.*

Heere is ended the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

[FRAGMENT IX (GROUP H)

THE MANCIPLE'S HEAD-LINK]

Heere folweth the Prologe of the Maunciples Tale.

Woot ye nat where ther stant a litel toun,
Which that ycleped is Bobbe-up-and-doun,
Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?
Ther gan oure Hooste for to jape and pleye,
And seyde, 'Sires, what! Dun is in the myre!
Is ther no man for preyere ne for hyre
That wole awake oure felawe al bihynde?
A theef myghte hym ful lightly robbe and bynde.
See how he nappeth! see how, for Cokkes bones,
As he wol falle fro his hors atones!
Is that a cook of London, with meschance!
Do hym come forth, he knoweth his penaunce;
For he shal telle a tale, by my fey,
Although it be nat worth a botel hey.
Awake, thou Cook,' quod he, 'God yeve thee sorwe!
What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
Hastow had fleen al nyght? or artow dronke?
Or hastow with som quene al nyght yswonke
So that thow mayst nat holden up thyn heed?'
This Cook, that was ful pale and nothyng reed,
Seyde to oure Hoost, 'So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me swich hevynesse,
Noot I nat why, that me were levere slepe
Than the beste galon wyn in Chepe.'
'Wel,' quod the Maunciple, 'if it may doon ese
To thee, sire Cook, and to no wight displese
Which that heere rideth in this compaignye,
And that oure Hoost wole of his curteisye,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;

For in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,
And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stynketh.
That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed.
Of me certeyn thou shalt nat been yglosed.
See how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight,
As though he wolde swolwe us anon right!
Hoold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kyn;
The devel of helle sette his foot therin!
Thy cursed breeth infecte wole us alle.
Fy, stynkyng swyn! fy, foule moote thou falle!
A, taketh heede, sires, of this lusty man!
Now, sweete sire, wol ye justen atte fan?
Therto, me thynketh, ye been wel yshape.
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape;
And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.'
And with this speche the Cook wax wrooth and wraw,
And on the Manciple he gan nodde faste
For lakke of speche, and doun the hors hym caste,
Where-as he lay til that men up hym took.
This was a fair chyvachee of a cook —
— Allas, he nadde holde hym by his ladel!
And er that he agayn were in his sadel,
Ther was greet showvyng, bothe to and fro,
To lifte hym up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweeldy was this sory palled goost.
And to the Manciple thanne spak oure Hoost,
'Bycause drynke hath dominacion
Upon this man, by my savacion,
I trowe lewedly he wolde telle his tale.
For were it wyn, or oold or moysty ale,
That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose
And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
He hath also to do moore than ynough
To kepen hym and his capul out of slough.
And if he falle from his capul eftsoone,
Thanne shal we alle have ynogh to doone
In liftyng up his hevy, dronken cors.
Telle on thy tale; of hym make I no fors.

'But yet, Manciple, in feith, thou art to nyce,
Thus openly repreve hym of his vice.
Another day he wole, *peraventure*,
Reclayme thee and brynge thee to lure.
I meene, he speke wole of smale thynges,
As for to pynchen at thy rekenynges,
That were nat honeste if it cam to preef.'
'No,' quod the Manciple, 'that were a greet mescheef;
So myghte he lightly brynge me in the snare.
Yet hadde I levere payen for the mare
Which he rit on than he sholde with me stryve.
I wol nat wratthen hym, al so moot I thryve!
That that I speke, I seyde it in my bourde.
And wite ye what? I have heer in a gourde
A draghte of wyn, ye, of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
This Cook shal drynke therof, if that I may;
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay.'
And certeynly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the Cook drank faste. Allas,
What neded hym? He drank ynough biforn.
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn,
To the Manciple he took the gourde agayn.
And of that drynke the Cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked hym in swich wise as he koude.
Thanne gan oure Hoost to laughen wonder loude,
And seyde, 'I se wel it is necessarie
Where-that we goon, that drynke we with us carie,
For that wol turne rancour and disese
Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
O thou Bacus, yblessed be thy name,
That so kanst turnen ernest into game!
Worshipe and thank be to thy deitee.
Of that mateere ye gete namoore of me.
Telle on thy tale, Manciple, I thee preye.'
'Wel, sire,' quod he; 'now herkneth what I seye.'

[The Manciple's Tale is a version of the ancient apologue of the Talking Bird. It is, I think, an early piece, written when Chaucer was still dominated by theories of formal rhetoric.]

[FRAGMENT X (GROUP I)

THE BLANK-PARSON LINK]

Heere folweth the Prologe of the Persons Tale.

By that the Manciple hadde his tale al ended,
The sonne fro the south lyne was descended
So lowe that he ne nas nat to my sighte
Degrees nyne and twenty as in highte.
Foure of the clokke it was tho, as I gesse;
For ellevene foot, or litel moore or lesse,
My shadwe was, at thilke tyme as there,
Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
In sixe feet equal of proporcion.
Therwith the Moones exaltacion —
I meene Libra — alwey gan ascende,
As we were entryng at a thropes ende.
For which our Hoost, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, oure joly compaignye,
Seyde in this wise, 'Lordynges everichoon,
Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon;
Fulfilled is my sentence and my decree.
I trowe that we han herd of ech degree;
Almoost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce.
I pray to God so yeve hym right good chaunce
That telleth this tale to us lustily.
'Sire Preest,' quod he, artow a vicary?
Or arte a person? sey sooth, by thy fey.
Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat oure pley;
For every man save thou hath toold his tale.
Unbokele, and shewe us what is in thy male;
For trewely, me thynketh by thy cheere,
Thou sholdest knytte up wel a greet mateere.
Telle us a fable anon, for Cokkes bones!'

This Person answerdë al atones,
'Thou getest fable noon ytoold for me;
For Paul, that writeth unto Tymothee,
Repreveth hem that weyveth soothfastnesse
And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowen whete if that me lest.
For which I seye, if that yow list to heere
Moralitee and vertuous mateere,
And thanne that ye wol yeve me audience,
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence,
Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I kan.
'But trusteth wel, I am a southren man;
I kan nat geeste "rum ram ruf" by lettre,
Ne, God woot, rym holde I but litel bettre.
And therfore, if yow list — I wol nat glose —
I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose
To knytte up al this feeste and make an ende.
'And Jesu, for his grace, wit me sende
To shewe yow the wey in this viage
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrymage
That highte Jerusalem celestial!
And if ye vouche sauf, anon I shal
Bigynne upon my tale; for which I preye
Telle youre avys; I kan no bettre seye.
'But nathelees this meditacion
I putte it ay under correccion
Of clerkes; for I am nat textueel.
I take but the sentence, trusteth weel;
Therfore I make a protestacion
That I wol stonde to correccion.'
Upon this word we han assented soone,
For as us semed, it was for to doone,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to yeve hym space and audience;
And bede oure Hoost he sholde to hym seye
That alle we to telle his tale hym preye.
Oure Hoost hadde the wordes for us alle.
'Sire Preest,' quod he, 'now faire yow bifalle!

Telleth,' quod he, youre meditacioun, 71
But hasteth yow, the sonne wole adoun;
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space.
And to do wel God sende yow his grace! 74
Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly heere.' 69
And with that word, he seyde in this manere:

Explicit prohemium.

Heere bigynneth the Persons Tale.

Jer. 6°. State super vias & videte & interrogate de viis antiquis / que sit via bona / & ambulate in ea & inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris &c.

[75] Oure sweete Lord God of hevene, that no man wole perisse, but wole that we comen alle to the knoweleche of hym and the blissful lif that is perdurable, [76] amonesteth us by the prophete Jeremie, and seith in this wyse: [77] 'Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth, and axeth of olde pathes — that is to seyn, of olde sentences — which is the goode wey, [78] and walketh in that wey, and ye shal fynde refresshynge for youre soules, &c.

[The Parson's Tale is not a tale, but a prose treatise on penitence, in three parts, occupying ninety-three pages.]

Here taketh the maker of this book his leve.

[1081] Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretys or rede that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. [1082] And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnynge and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyd bettre if I hadde had konnynge; [1083] for oure Boke seith 'Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine'; and that is myn entente.

[1084] Wherfore I biseke yow mekely, for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes; [1085] and namely of my translacions and en-

ditynges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retraccions: [1086] as is the book of Troilus; the book also of Fame; the book of the .xxv. Ladies; the book of the Duchesse; the book of Seint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; the Tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sownen into synne; [1087] the book of the Leon; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song and many a leccherous lay, that Crist, for his grete mercy, foryeve me the synne.

[1088] But of the translacion of Boece *de consolacione*, and othere bookes of legendes of seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, and devocion, [1089] that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist, and his blisful Mooder, and alle the seintes of hevene, [1090] bisekynge hem that they, from hennesforth unto my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes and to studie to the salvacion of my soule, and graunte me grace, of verray penitence, confession and satisfaccion to doon in this present lyf; [1091] thurgh the benigne grace of Hym that is Kyng of Kynges and Preest over alle Preestes; that boghte us with the precious blood of His herte; [1092] so that I may been oon of hem at the day of doome that shulle be saved. *Qui cum patre &cetera.*

Heere is ended the book of the tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Jesu Crist have mercy!
Amen!

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS IN THE NOTES

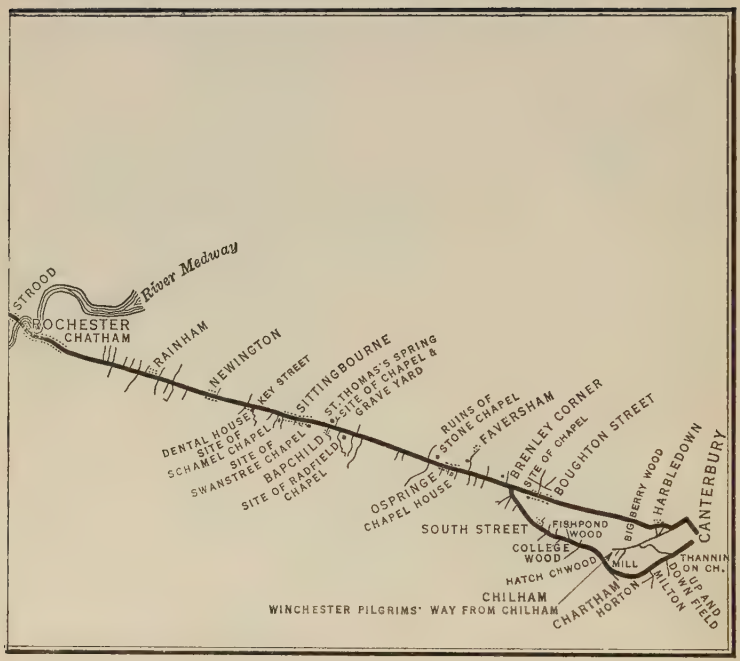
AA	Anelida and Arcite.
Arch	Archaeologia.
Archiv	Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen.
Arderne	Treatise on the Fistula (EETS). 1910.
Baillie-Grohman	The Master of Game. 1908.
Boethius	Boethii Liber de Consolatione Philosophiae, trans. G. Chaucer.
Brusendorff	The Chaucer Tradition. 1925.
CA	Gower's Confessio Amantis. ed. Macaulay, 4 v., 1899–1902.
CkT	Cook's Tale.
ClT	Clerk's Tale.
Conn Ac	Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.
Cook, Hist Backgr	Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight (*Conn Ac*, XX, 161–240).
Coulton, Social Life	Social Life in England from the Conquest to the Reformation. 1918.
CT	Canterbury Tales.
Curry	Chaucer and the Mediæval Sciences. 1926.
CYT	Canon's Yeoman's Tale.
EDD	English Dialect Dictionary.
EETS	Early English Text Society.
ES	Englische Studien.
FkT	Franklin's Tale.
FrT	Friar's Tale.
Froissart	Chronicles, transl. by Johnes.
Hammond	Chaucer. A Bibliographical Manual. 1908.
Hinckley	Notes on Chaucer. A Commentary on the Prolog and Six Canterbury Tales. 1907.
HF	House of Fame.
JEGP	Journal of English and Germanic Philology.
Jerome	St. Jerome, Adversus Jovinianum.
JGP	Journal of Germanic Philology.
Kittredge	Chaucer and his Poetry. 1915.
KT	Knight's Tale.
Lanfranc	Cirurgerie (EETS). 1894.
La Tour	The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry (EETS). 1868.
Letter Book F, G, H	Calendar of Letter Books of the Corporation of London (ed. Sharpe).
LGW	Legende of Good Women.
Liddell	Chaucer: Prologue, Knightes Tale, Nonnes Prestes Tale. 1922.

LR	Life Records of Chaucer (Chaucer Soc.). 4 vols. 1875–1900.
Lounsbury	Studies in Chaucer. 3 vols. 1892.
McT	Manciple's Tale.
Mabieu	Les Lamentations de Matheolus (ed. Van Hamel). 2 vols.
Manly, Knight	"A Knight ther was" (Trans. Amer. Phil. Assn., xxxviii, 89–107).
Manly, New Light	Some New Light on Chaucer. 1926.
Manly, Rhet	Chaucer and the Rhetoricians (Warton Lecture, British Acad.). 1926.
Mel	Tale of Melibeus.
MiT	Miller's Tale.
MkT	Monk's Tale.
MLN	Modern Language Notes.
MLR	Modern Language Review.
MLT	Man of Law's Tale.
MPh	Modern Philology.
MrT	Merchant's Tale.
N and Q	Notes and Queries.
NPT	Nuns' Priest's Tale.
OED	Oxford English Dictionary.
PdT	Pardoner's Tale.
Petersen	On the Sources of the Nonne Prestes Tale. 1898.
PF	Parlement of Foules
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association.
PhQ	Philological Quarterly.
PhT	Physician's Tale.
PrT	Prioress's Tale.
PT	Parson's Tale.
Rom Rev	Romanic Review.
RR	Romance of the Rose.
RT	Reeve's Tale.
ShT	Shipman's Tale.
SmT	Summoner's Tale.
SNT	Second Nun's Tale.
SqT	Squire's Tale.
Stud Phil	Studies in Philology.
Tatlock	Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works (Chaucer Soc.). 1907.
TC	Troylus and Criseyde.
Tes	Teseide.
Th	Sir Thopas.
WBT	Wife of Bath's Tale.
Wells	Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1400 A.D. (with supplements).
Wylie	History of Henry IV. 4 vols. 1884–98.
ZsfrPh	Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie.

THE PILGRIMS' WAY
FROM
LONDON TO CANTERBURY

MAINLY FROM A TRACING FROM THE ORDNANCE MAPS, BY PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

ABOUT 10 MILES



WINCHESTER PILGRIMS' WAY FROM CHILHAM

NOTES

THE PROLOGUE

1. This line is accented thus:

Whan' that A'prille with' his shou'res soo'te.

There is no evidence for making **Aprille** a trisyllable. This kind of line is called a "nine-syllabled" line. The use of it here gives the poem a quick start.

1–11. Cummings regards Boethius i, m. 5 as the main source of ll. 1–7 (*MLN*, XXXVII, 86). Perhaps so; but many mediaeval poems begin in similar fashion; cf. e.g., the romance of *Fulk Fitz Warine*, a fourteenth century prose version of a thirteenth century poem.

Our pleasure in the break-up of winter and the coming of spring is nothing to the joy felt by mediaeval Europeans. In the Middle Ages, during the winter, high and low had been uncomfortable in castle and cottage. Spring brought new life in a real sense to them as well as to the birds and flowers. Besides, they lived in the country or in small towns and saw day by day the reawakening of the earth. Mediaeval poetry in all languages is therefore full of charming expressions of the joy that was universally felt, and many records attest the genuineness of the feeling. For full accounts of spring sports, see Stow, *A Survey of London*, chapter xi, or Coulton, *Social Life*, sect. x and *Chaucer's England*, chaps. ix and xxi. Furthermore, almost every day of spring and every act of spring labor were connected with some folk custom originally belonging to the ancient pagan religion, the central theme of which was worship of the creative forces of nature; see Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, Chambers, *Book of Days*, Cornford, *Origins of Greek Comedy*, or E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. I.

Besides setting the tone of the poem, these lines give the approximate date of the events. Lines 1–2 tell us that the April showers have already had time to pierce the drought of March; ll. 7–8 make the date more definite. In April, the sun — called 'young' because everything is reborn at the vernal equinox — runs through parts of two signs of the Zodiac (see p. 135), Aries (April 1–11) and Taurus (April 12–30). As he has run his half-course in the Ram (Aries), it is obviously after April 11. More specific indications of the date are given later in the conversations linking the tales.

In l. 6 **croppes** means, not 'crops,' but 'shoots,' 'sprouts.'

The little birds of ll. 9–10 are probably nightingales, for the Knight of La Tour Landry says that during the courting season the nightingales "synge plesauntly day and night," but "whan they have rejoysed thaire amerous desyre and plesaunces, thei make abace melodye, for thei synge no more." (*La Tour*, p. 156); cf. ll. 97–98. Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* x, 43) says they sing day and night for a fortnight. See Flügel, *JEGP*, I, 118.

12–18. The custom of making pilgrimages is one of the most interesting and important features of mediaeval life. Nothing in modern times quite compares with it. Every year from all parts of the Christian world people flocked by thousands to the shrines of the saints. Poverty was no obstacle to this sort of travel, for even the poorest could depend upon being fed and clothed by the boundless charity of mediaeval society. The wills of the rich often left funds to pay the expenses of pilgrims; and some guilds sent a certain number of their members annually to certain shrines. Most frequently, of course, people visited the holy places of their own country, but those oppressed with a heavier burden of sin, or suffering from a more stubborn disease, or animated by a greater love of travel and adventure sought the more distant shrines — Jerusalem, the city of the Crucifixion; Rome, the ancient city of St. Peter and the resting place of a thousand saints and martyrs; Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia, the shrine of St. James the Apostle; or Cologne, where lay the relics of the Three Kings, who had followed the star to the birthplace of Christ. Among the hundreds of shrines in England, the most famous was that of St. Thomas at Canterbury.

Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered on December 29, 1170. Popular feeling ran so high that he was canonized as St. Thomas of Canterbury in 1173, and plenary indulgence was given for a pilgrimage to his shrine. Almost immediately he became the subject of romantic legends, and many miracles were wrought at his tomb, which soon became exceedingly rich from the gifts of the pious and the grateful.

The most detailed account of its wealth is that of an Italian traveler in 1496–97: "But the magnificence of the tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, is that which surpasses all belief. This, notwithstanding its great size, is entirely covered over with plates of pure gold; but the gold is scarcely visible because of the variety of precious stones with which it is studded, such as sapphires, diamonds, rubies, balas-rubies, and emeralds; and on every side that the eye turns, something more beautiful than the other appears. Nor to this natural wealth is human artistry lacking, for the gold is carved and engraved in beautiful designs, both large and small, and set in relievo are agates, jaspers and cornelians, and cameos, some of the cameos being of such size as I dare not state. But everything else is far surpassed by a ruby not larger than a man's thumb, which is set on the right of the altar. The church is rather dark, especially where the shrine is, and when we went to see it the sun was nearly setting and the day was cloudy, yet I saw that ruby as well as if I had it in my hand; they say it was the gift of a king of France." — *A Relation of the Island of England* (Camden Soc.), p. 30.

The famous scholar Erasmus wrote: "Gold was the meanest thing to be seen there. All shone and glittered with the rarest and most precious jewels, of an extraordinary bigness."

The antiquary John Stow said that when the shrine was stripped, at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538, the spoil in gold and jewels "filled two great chests, such as six or eight strong men could do no more than convey one of them at once out of the church." — *Annales*, anno 1538.

dissolved 1536

17–18. We have here what is called in English "identical rhyme" and in French "rime riche." In modern English poetry this is avoided, but in Middle English it was sought for as a special beauty; in Old French, rhymes of this sort were sometimes used throughout a poem, e.g. *Le Mariage des Sept Arts*.

19. **on a day.** What day was this? See II, 6.

20ff. Chaucer does not tell us what was the cause of his devotion. He may have received the help of St. Thomas, and have been fulfilling a vow. It is also possible that he may actually have visited the shrine in connection with the illness of his wife, who seems to have been dead by the autumn of 1387. But after all, it is hardly likely that he is narrating the incidents of a real pilgrimage in which he took part. He must in any event have been familiar with the road and the pilgrimages, as he had often passed through Canterbury on his way to France; and after the spring of 1386 he apparently lived for several years at Greenwich, where he would have seen many a group of pilgrims passing.

20. **the Tabard.** In early times houses were not numbered but were distinguished by signs. The sign of the inn at which the pilgrims met was that of the tabard, a coat richly embroidered with armorial bearings. It is still worn by officers of the College of Arms. An authority on the subject describes it thus: "It has no sleeves, is whole before, and open at the sides, with a square collar, and is winged at the shoulders. It is often seen on ancient seals, and is what sovereigns, princes, nobles, gentry, all entitled to armorial bearings, wore over the other parts of their dress. When they went to the hostile field, the arms of the wearer were embroidered upon it." For each of the kings of arms (the highest officials) of the Heralds' College the wardrobe allowance (in 1804, apparently) was as follows:

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
3½ yds. of blue satin @ 16 *s.*	6	16	0
2½ yds. of crimson satin @ 17 *s.*	2	2	6
1½ yds. of yellow satin @ 16 *s.*	1	4	0
3 yds. cloth of gold @ 3 *l.* 5 *s.*	9	15	0
2 lb. 6 oz. Venice gold @ 4 *l.* the lb.	10	0	0
6 oz. Venice gold lace @ 9 *s.* the oz.	2	14	0
4 oz. Venice gold lace with plate @ 9 *s.* 6 *d.*	1	18	0
1 lb. colored silk	2	0	0
8 oz. black silk @ 2 *s.*	0	16	0
8 oz. of pearl and spangles for the coat @ 8 *s.*	3	4	0
3¼ yds. crimson taffeta for lining @ 15 *s.*	2	8	9
Embroidering it	26	13	4
Canvas and making	1		
	£71	11	7

— Noble, *Hist. of the College of Arms*, (ed. 1804), p. 49.

When the tabard had ceased to be commonly worn and the meaning of the term had been forgotten, the name of the inn was corrupted to the Talbot.

The best general account of the old inn is in *Surrey Archaeological Society, Collections*, xiii (see also the *Victoria County History of Surrey*, IV, 127). In Chaucer's time, and until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1548, the inn was the property of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester. The abbot's lodgings, when he visited London, were adjacent to the inn if not within its boundaries. The property, consisting originally of two tenements or holdings, was given to the Abbey of Hyde in 1306. Transcripts of deeds relating to it are preserved in MS Harl. 1761 of the British Museum, which is a cartulary of the Abbey lands ending with 1478. Details will be given later in an article in *MPh.* Here it will suffice to say that the tenements were deeded to the Abbey in 1306 by William de Ludegarsale on behalf of Hugh de Dyneton, or Dynyngton, and his wife Cecily, the real owners, on condition that Hugh and Cecily should, as long as they lived, have a corrody from Hyde Abbey of maintenance such as a monk would have, and their son Robert should have food and clothing such as were enjoyed by ministers of the Abbey. As some of Chaucer's ancestors were known as "de Dyneton" or "de Dynyngton," there may have been some actual connection of the donors with the Chaucer family.

The two tenements lay side by side, fronting on the east side of the high street, now Borough High Street, and running back to the common dyke of Southwark on the east. The original building was destroyed by the great Southwark fire of 1676, and the picture commonly printed (from Urry's edition of Chaucer) represents a later building. Even this has now disappeared, but the location is easily made out. The present public house called the Tabard occupies only a small part of the original site of the inn, which seems to have been a wedge-shaped piece of land, $322\frac{3}{4}$ ft. deep, having a frontage of about $77\frac{3}{4}$ ft. and being about $126\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide at the back.

24. **Wel nyne and twenty.** No doubt Chaucer means exactly what he says; see notes on 164 and 542–44.

28. **wyde** means 'spacious,' but it probably also suggests the hospitable welcome of the inn.

29. **atte beste,** 'in the best manner possible.' **Atte** is a combination of **at** and **the.** At a later time, when the final *e* had become silent, there was no difference in pronunciation between this compound and the simple word **at;** cf. also **at first, at last.**

30. **shortly** does not mean 'in a little while,' but 'to tell the story briefly.'

31. Chaucer here represents himself as taking the initiative in making the acquaintance of the other pilgrims. Most editors picture him as shy and reserved, but their view is based on a misunderstanding. Cf. VII, 1883ff.

43ff. The **Knight** is described first, undoubtedly because he is the person of highest rank in the group of pilgrims. Both his character and his career must have appealed to Chaucer's contemporaries as they do to us. The insti-

tution of chivalry was already doomed by the invention of gunpowder and the development of commerce, but as always happens to a doomed ideal, devotion to it burned in the hearts of some with unwonted, and even fantastic, intensity and purity, as can be read in many a page of Froissart and other chroniclers. Chaucer's Knight was not, as Skeat's note implies, a mercenary soldier who sought employment under foreign lords when there was no fighting going on at home. The campaigns to which he devoted his life — for the French wars are merely glanced at in l. 47 — had a twofold interest: first, they were all crusades against the infidels; secondly, they were all fought on the very borders of European civilization. They fall into three groups: (1) those against the Moors, at the western end of the Mediterranean — Algezir, Belmarye, and Tramyssene; (2) those against Turks and other heathen at the eastern end — Alisaundre, Lyeys, Satalye, and Palatye; (3) those against Lithuanians and Tartars in what was then the borderland between Christians and heathens in the northeast — Lettowe and Ruce. The enemies in the northeast were rude, semi-civilized barbarians: those in the south were regarded as equal, if not superior, to the Christians in science, art, and general culture. The mysterious charm and wealth of the Orient are well suggested by that story — possibly heard by the Knight himself at Alisaundre or in Palatye — which the Squire began, but left half told.

The siege of **Algezir,** one of the most famous enterprises of its time, was part of the long warfare which resulted in driving the Moors out of Spain after an occupation of more than six hundred years. The city was the chief seaport of Granada and lay just west of the present fortress of Gibraltar. The Spaniards under King Alfonso XI invested the city on August 3, 1342. Money was sent to aid them by the pope and the king of France, and Christian knights came from France, Germany, and England to participate in this 'holy war,' for the salvation of their souls, as the Spanish *Cronica* records. The leaders of the bands from England were Henry, earl of Derby (later earl and duke of Lancaster), and William Montagu, earl of Salisbury. King Edward himself, in a letter to King Alfonso, speaks of the desire he had cherished to take part in the siege. Chaucer was an infant at this time but might later have heard tales of the siege from many of the English knights who were present; Henry of Lancaster was, of course, the father of the Duchess Blanche.

The king of **Belmarye** (the name of a tribe, the Beni-Marin, transferred to the territory occupied by them, a part of Morocco) was an ally of the Moorish king of Granada in 1342–44, but the fighting to which Chaucer refers in ll. 57 and 62 (**Tramissene,** modern Tlemçen, in western Algeria) perhaps belongs to a later date. There was a plan for an invasion in 1365: "une armee pour aller sur Sarrazins qui les royaulmes de Grenade et de Belle Marine tiennent," *Chron. de Sir Bertrand du Guesclin,* chap. lv; cf. also chaps. lvii and lxvii. Froissart gives accounts of campaigns in the '80's.

The capture of **Alexandria** in Egypt by an army from many Christian lands under the leadership of Peter, king of Cyprus, in 1365, though of no permanent importance, was famous and highly spectacular and was celebrated in a poem of about 8000 lines (*La Prise d'Alexandrie*) by Guillaume de Machaut, the leading French poet of the day. Peter had visited all the courts of Europe to

procure aid for his crusade and was feted everywhere. King Edward of England entertained him royally and, although he refused to commit England to the crusade, allowed all knights who wished to join Peter to do so. The *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 56, says there were present at the capture several (*plures*) from England and Aquitaine, who brought back with them "pannos aureos holosericos, splendoresque gemmarum exoticos, in testimonium tantae victoriae." Many who went were with Peter not only at Alexandria but also in campaigns in **Satalye** (Adalia) and **Lyeyes** (Ayas), two of the most important cities of Asia Minor, in 1361 and 1367. The S of **Satalye**, like that of **Stamboul**, is the remnant of the Greek preposition εἰς.

Palatye (modern Balat) was ruled by a Seljuk Turk, who was expelled in 1390 by the Ottoman Turk Bajazet (Bayezid). See Cook, *Hist. Backgr.*, pp. 235f. Cook notes that the name should be *Pala'tia*, not *Palati'a*.

The campaigns in **Pruce** (Prussia), **Ruce** (Russia), and **Lettowe** (Letau, Lithuania) were conducted under the leadership of the Knights of the Teutonic Order — a military order founded in Palestine, but early in the thirteenth century invited by Poland to aid in repelling the pagans of Lithuania and Prussia. The prestige of the order became so great that knights from all parts of Europe visited Königsberg, its principal city, to learn chivalry and take part in its wars. Many Englishmen were among these visitors.

From l. 87 we infer that the Knight had come straight from his port of landing to make his pilgrimage, no doubt to give thanks for his safe return, as was commonly done. If he had just come from Germany, he may have landed at Ipswich or Orwell (cf. l. 277) or Harwich; if from the East, his ship, coming through the strait of Gibraltar, may have landed at some port in the west of England, say Dartmouth (cf. l. 389). But in that case he would more probably have taken the pilgrim road from Winchester to Canterbury, not passing through London.

The romantic character of the Knight's career is suggested by ll. 62–63, which show that the tournament was not merely an amusement in peace but a method of warfare. Froissart describes such a tournament, in which ten Christian knights fought with the Saracens at the siege of the City of Africa in 1390 (Froissart, bk. iv, ch. 22). Vivid pictures of this chivalric type of warfare against the heathen (but placed nearly two hundred years earlier) are given in Scott's *Talisman*.

As the portrait is far from being merely typical, it may well be that of some real knight, or, more probably, a composite picture based upon the adventures of more than one knight. It may be noted that near the Thames Street house of Chaucer's father lived several members of the Scrope family whose careers resemble that of the Knight: Sir William Scrope was at the siege of Satalye; Sir Stephen was at the capture of Alexandria and in Prussia, Hungary, and the Orient; and Sir Geoffrey also fought with the Teutonic Knights and was buried at Königsberg. That Chaucer knew the Scropes well we learn from his own testimony in the Scrope-Grosvenor trial, 1386.

For many picturesque facts about the campaigns of the Knight, see Manly, *Knight*, or Cook, *Hist Backgr.* Cook thinks Chaucer may have taken as his models Henry, earl of Lancaster (d. 1361) and his grandson Henry, earl of

Derby (later Henry IV of England). But Chaucer's Knight, though probably a banneret, was apparently not a member of the nobility.

52. To **begin the bord** certainly meant to 'sit in the place of highest honor.' The Teutonic Knights occasionally held a special banquet called a Table of Honor, at which the "bord was bigonne" by the knight — of whatever nation — who was most renowned for his chivalry. Cook gives the best account of these "Tables" (*Hist Backgr*, pp. 209–12 and *JEGP*, XIV, 375–88) but strangely thinks that Chaucer can have heard of them from no one but Henry, earl of Derby. Chaucer, however, does not appear to be talking about the Tables of Honor, for he says that his Knight began the board "ful *ofte* tyme," whereas Cook says we know of only five Tables of Honor from 1377 to 1400. Chaucer apparently thought that the honor of beginning the board was assigned at every formal banquet — as was the custom, if we may believe the romances, cf. *OED*, s. v. *board*.

54. **reysed.** *Reyse*, n. and v., from Ger. *Reise*, was a technical military term in both French and English. It seems to have died out early in the fifteenth century, for the scribes of several of the MSS substitute some other word for it in the present passage: "been," "ridden," etc.

60. **armee.** Skeat adopted **aryve**, from MSS Ha^4 and Gg, but an **armee** is 'an armed expedition' either by land or by sea. There is no good evidence for **aryve** in the sense of 'disembarcation.' For the use of **at**, cf. "The Squier come from a viage that he hadde ben atte" (*La Tour*, p. 51) translating, "l'escuier . . . vint d'un voyaige et d'une armée ou il avoit esté."

70. **vileynye** is not 'wickedness' but 'rudeness,' 'lack of courtesy,' characteristic of a country boor (**villanus**); cf. l. 726.

72. Note that **verray** is an adjective, meaning 'true.' Chaucer never uses it as an adverb.

74. **hors** is plural (cf. § 18). Are we to suppose that the Yeoman was leading the Knight's war horse (*destrier*)? There was a regular post service of horses for travelers between Southwark and Canterbury, but none of our pilgrims, except perhaps the Shipman, seem to have made use of it. The charge was 12 *d.* from Southwark to Rochester, and 12 *d.* from there to Canterbury. The horses were branded to prevent their being stolen; cf. Jusserand, *Engl. Wayfaring Life*, p. 348.

75ff. It may be worth noting that, as they were riding, neither the Knight nor any of the other pilgrims has the conventional pilgrim dress — gown, staff, and scrip; but all would probably bring back with them Canterbury bells or the little flasks called *ampullae Thomae* (for pictures of them and other Pilgrim's signs see Sidney Heath, *Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 129–32).

79–100. **The Squier.** The Squire's dress (ll. 89ff.) suggests that he had not been with his father in "his viage" but had met him on his return, perhaps in London. He is the typical young man of fashion, wearing the short coat and absurdly long and wide sleeves railed against by the satirists of the time.

The one **chyvachie** in which he could have joined took place in the summer of 1383, in Flanders and the adjoining French districts of Artois and Picardy. It was called a crusade; but was really a religious war within the Church, which at that time had two rival popes: Urban VI at Rome, to whom the English adhered, and Clement VII at Avignon, supported by the French. It was headed by the able and worldly Bishop of Norwich, and though professing to be directed against the followers of Pope Clement, it was little else than a series of plundering raids in Flanders and the neighboring districts.

As to the Squire's accomplishments, we may remember that Chaucer himself had been a squire and had, perhaps, been just such a gay young fellow. He was with the army that ravaged Artois, Picardy, and Champayne in 1359; cf. especially Emerson, "Chaucer's First Military Service," *Rom Rev*, 321–61.

Of course the Squire's accomplishments were those of a common ideal, which had long been recognized and often set forth in French literature; according to the *Enseignements* of Robert de Ho, the well-bred young man should know how to sit a horse, manage dogs and falcons, speak modestly, act firmly, and compose verses properly.

81. **lovyere:** Chaucer's usual form is **lovere.** Whether the Southern **lovyere** had any special technical or slang vogue, I do not know.

82. **I gesse:** cf. Hinckley, *MPh*, XIV, 317, and the quotation from Selden, below, note on l. 310.

83. **of evene lengthe,** i.e. of moderate height. Robert of Gloucester says of William the Conqueror (Morris, *Specimens*, II, 15):

> Suithe thikke mon he was and of grete strengthe,
> Grete-wombede and ballede and bote of evene lengthe.

88. **in his lady grace.** For the genitive without *s* cf. § 17.

91. **floytynge:** since Flügel's note (*JGP*, I, 108), this has commonly been interpreted as 'whistling,' but perhaps the older interpretation is correct. Among the many instruments heard by Mahieu when he dreamed he was being received into heaven were 'fleütes de Behaingne' (*Mahieu*, iii, 2946). The French version of this poem dates from c. 1370. Is it not likely that the Bohemian flute had become fashionable in England after the coming of Queen Anne? I do not know the old Bohemian form for **flute;** if it was derived from the MHG **floite,** this would account for Chaucer's form in this passage. In *HF*, iii, 133 **floute** may name an earlier instrument (cf. OF **flaute, flahute** and Prov. **flauta**).

Flügel's objection that the Squire seems not to have had a flute with him is weak. Several of his accomplishments were not exhibited on the pilgrimage.

93. According to Hoccleve (*De Regimine Principum*, 421, 553) such sleeves were still fashionable in his day, a generation later.

95. To **make songs** was to compose music; to **endite** was to compose the words. Both were fitting accomplishments for a 'lovyere'; Chaucer tells us

that he himself when young had made many hymns for the holy days of the God of Love —

That highten balades, roundels, virelayes. — *LGW* (F), 423.

As he was then working in the technique of Guillaume de Machaut, who insisted that the lyric poet should compose the music as well as the words of his songs, it is likely that Chaucer also composed music. This conclusion is supported by the interest in music manifested in his writings.

100. In ancient times carving was regarded as specifically a gentleman's accomplishment. To a squire belonged the duty of carving before his knight; cf. III, 2243–45 and IV, 1772–73. For details on ancient manners, see *Early English Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, or *The Babees Book*, ed. and modernized by Edith Rickert.

101–117. **The Yeoman,** as Tyrwhitt long ago pointed out, is not the servant of the Squire, but with him accompanies the Knight; the **he** of 101 resumes **him** of 79. The costume of the Yeoman seems better suited for his duties as forester than for a foreign campaign. Either Chaucer conceived him as having ridden with the Squire to meet the Knight or thought of him in his general character rather than in the special conditions of this journey. As it is, he is almost a purely decorative figure, but if Chaucer's plan of the *Canterbury Tales* had been completed, we might reasonably have expected from him a good tale, perhaps *Gamelyn* or one like it.

104. Roger Ascham, in his *Toxophilus*, speaks very scornfully of peacock arrows, but they were in great favor in Chaucer's time. They are often mentioned in contemporary accounts of purchases, and Lydgate ("The Horse, Goose, and Sheep," 211–14) says:

Through al the land of Albion
For fethered arwes, as I reherse can,
Goos is the best, as in comparison,
Except fetheres of pekok or of swan.

107. According to Ascham (*Tox.* 128–33), feathers may be low for either of two reasons: (1) naturally — "Nowe to looke on the fedders of all maner of birdes, you shall se some so lowe, weke, and shorte," etc.; (2) artificially — "the yonge goose fether is weake and fyne . . . and it must be curled at the first shering somewhat hye, for with shoting it wyll sattle (settle) and faule (fall) very moche."

115. Images of the saints were commonly worn for protection; readers of *Quentin Durward* will recall King Louis, with his hat stuck full of images. St. Christopher was the patron saint of foresters, but his cult was not confined to them. That the sight of his image protected from danger and death is certified by many mediaeval verses:

1. Christophore sancte, virtutes sunt tibi tante,
Qui te mane vident nocturno tempore rident.
2. Christoferi faciem die quecunque tueris,
Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris.

Other interesting verses are given by J. G. Waller in an article "On a Painting of St. Christopher in Newdigate Church, Surrey," *Surrey Arch. Coll.* VI, 57–69 and 293–300. Automobiles which I have hired in Italy, Southern France, and Corsica were protected by an image of St. Christopher.

119–162. The **Prioress** was no doubt a contemporary type, but she is thoroughly individualized. Chaucer seems to have had in mind a particular person. The fact that the details of her table manners (127–136) are derived from *RR* does not contradict this. These were simply the manners of good society throughout the Middle Ages and are prescribed in the books of etiquette; cf. the *EETS* volume on *Early English Meals and Manners*, or Rickert, *The Babees Book*. See also "Le Chastoiement des Dames," ll. 521ff., quoted by Langlois, *La Vie en France au Moyen Age*, p. 181:

> Totes les fois que vos bevez
> Votre boiche bien essuez,
> Que li vins engraissiez ne soit, etc.

It is not definitely said that she was Prioress of the convent of St. Leonard's at Stratford — only that her French was of the kind spoken there — but she may well have been. Stratford — unlike the neighboring abbey at Barking, which was a special resort for ladies of the aristocracy — was patronized by the citizens of London. If it was not a sort of finishing school for the daughters of the London middle class, as seems probable, it at least received such persons as lodgers (see *Cal. Wills . . . in the Court of Husting*, I and II, *passim*).

Lowes, *Anglia*, XXXIII, 440–51, shows that **coy** means simply 'quiet' and has no implication of coquetry. According to Langlois, *op. cit.*, p. 178, people were judged by their manner of laughing; *RR*, *La Clef d'Amors*, and similar treatises taught when and how ladies were to laugh. **Coi** was commonly applied to charming ladies; cf. Froissart, *Dit dou Blau Chevalier*, ll. 99f.:

> De la plaisans, simple, amoreuse et quoie,
> Qu'ai tant amé.

A word may be said about the Prioress's singing. Dr. J. Lewis Browne, an authority on Gregorian music, tells me that the recitative parts of the church service, such as the psalms, canticles, and responses, have, from time immemorial, been chanted in a nasal drone, to avoid straining the throat. This is also the practice in Buddhistic convents in India.

In ll. 124–26, Chaucer is poking fun at the French spoken at Stratford. Professor Skeat was certainly mistaken in denying this and maintaining that Englishmen regarded their French as equal to that of Paris. Gower, among others, apologizes for his French, as that of an Englishman; see especially Hinckley, pp. 10f., and read the amusing account given by Trevisa of the decay of French in England at this time (quoted in modernized text at p. 7 above). At court French was probably spoken well, for it was thronged with Frenchmen and the nobility often sent their children to France to acquire a good accent. But what was the French of Stratford? We can hardly doubt that the fashion of speaking there was set by Queen Philippa's sister, Lady Elizabeth of Hainaut (Manly, *New Light*, pp. 204–09 and 218–20), and

consequently that it was not Parisian French but the dialect of Hainaut. Chaucer's wife, Philippa de Roet, also came from Hainaut. Sir Frank Heath suggests that this may have added to Chaucer's enjoyment of his jest.

The jibes at the Prioress's attempts to imitate the manners of the ladies of the court (ll. 139f.) and at her pronunciation of French (ll. 124 ff.) may possibly represent the views of the aristocratic Abbey of Barking, where an Elizabeth Chaucy, supposed to have been a sister or a daughter of the poet, became a nun in 1381 (*LR*, No. 144). But Chaucer himself had abundant reason for interest in the convent at Stratford. It was situated on the king's highway only two and a half miles east of Aldgate, where Chaucer lived from 1374 to 1386, and he had apparently visited it when a boy, in the train of Elizabeth, countess of Ulster, and her husband, Prince Lionel. In September 1356 they visited Stratford to see Elizabeth of Hainaut, a sister of Queen Philippa and consequently aunt of Prince Lionel. This lady was a nun in St. Leonard's for many years. In her will, dated 1375, she makes two bequests to a sister nun named Madame Argentine (*Domina Argentyn*). This name is curiously suggestive of *Madame Eglentine*, but we know the name of the prioress of St. Leonard's at the time Chaucer was writing to have been Mary Syward (or Suhard).

If the Prioress attempted to imitate the manners of great ladies in most respects (139f.), she — appropriately enough to her sincerely religious feeling — differed from them in swearing. Many of them no doubt swore "good mouth-filling oaths," even "to-tearing our blessed Lord's body" (cf. VI, 472); her greatest oath was only **by St. Loy.** Even great dignitaries of the Church swore profanely; the favorite oath of Samson, the famous abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, was "By the face of God (Per faciem Dei)," perhaps in imitation of King Henry II, who swore "Per oculos Dei" (*Jocelyn of Brakelond*, Camden Soc., pp. 35, 169, etc.). Perhaps, however, Chaucer wrote this line, not to suggest her piety, but her social status. Lowes (*Rom Rev*, V, 368–81) has made it clear that this does not mean, as some have supposed, that she did not swear at all, and has shown why St. Loy was her favorite saint. "He was at once, in a word, an artist and a courtier and a saint, a man of great physical beauty, and a lover, in his earlier days, of personal adornment." Born about 590, he was apprenticed to a goldsmith, and became famous as the artificer of beautiful chalices, crosses, censers, and reliquaries, and founder of the great school of enamel work centering at Limoges. The Latin form of his name is *Eligius*, the French *Eloi*, shortened, as here, to *Loy*, *Loi*. The reasons why the carter, in *FrT* (III, 1564) swears by St. Loy are very different; they are fully discussed by Lowes in the same article, pp. 382–85.

There may have been a special cult of St. Loy at the English court at this time, perhaps because Queen Philippa came from the district in which the saint was especially popular. The Countess of Pembroke gave an image of St. Loy to the high altar of the Grey Friars, one of the most fashionable churches in London.

Brusendorff airily declares that the choice of St. Loy was due solely to the need of a rhyme; but rhyming is not as difficult as Brusendorff implies.

120. On the need for a final **e** in **Seint** see Tatlock in *MLN*, XXXI, 139 *n.*

125. **scole**; used rather vaguely; cf. what is said of the dancing of the parish clerk Absolon:

> In twenty manner coude he trippe and daunce,
> After the scole of Oxenforde tho. (I, 3328f.)

and "Many siche feynyngis ben of the fendis scole." (Wyclif, *English Works*, ed. Arnold, i, 136.)

146–50. Nuns were forbidden by Church law to keep dogs; see for example an order of 1345 quoted in Dugdale (*Mon. Angl.* II, p. 619, No. xi): "Also we command that neither birds [perhaps falcons] nor dogs nor little birds be kept by any abbess or nun within the walls of the abbey or within the choir, especially while they should be engaged in divine services." Some old-fashioned moralists objected then, as now, to the interest ladies of fashion took in little dogs; see the amusing story (*La Tour*, pp. 28f.) of the lady who was rebuked by a friar for giving her two little dogs "disshes with soppes of mylke . . . and the pore pepill so lene and famisshed for hunger." We may certainly hesitate, as Hinckley does (p. 12), to place the Prioress among the ladies who accepted dogs as presents from their lovers; but if ladies of the court kept dogs, the Prioress would of course wish to do so.

147. **wastel breed.** According to the London assize of bread (*Liber Albus*, transl. Riley, pp. 303–05), this was a fine white bread, exceeded in cost only by **payn demayn** (see note on VII, 1915). Stratford was one of the principal places that supplied bread to London in the fourteenth century, but this may have no significance for the Prioress's use of **wastel breed** for her dogs.

149. **men** is not plural here, but a phonetically weakened form of the indefinite **man**, 'someone' (= French *on*).

152. **eyen greye as glas:** the usual expression for what we call 'blue eyes.' They were much admired; according to the "ABC on the Passion," even Christ was thought to have had "gray eyes" (*Pol. Relig. and Love Poems*, p. 273).

155. It is true that mediaeval ladies plucked out their hair and eyebrows to make their foreheads seem high, but here Chaucer seems to be speaking rather of a broad forehead. Gower emphasized this as a point of beauty (*CA*, vi, 769f.):

> He seth hire front is large and plain
> Withoute fronce of eny grein.

And Bishop Stapledon, who was sent to inspect the future queen Philippa, reported that "her forehead is high and broad, and standing somewhat forward" (Coulton, *Chaucer and his England*, p. 181).

Compare Hoccleve's satirical praise: "hir golden forheed is ful narw & smal" (*Minor Poems*, II, 37).

159. **a peire of bedes:** a rosary. Until recently English retained some other phrases in which **pair** meant a set of more than two: 'a pair of stairs,'

'a pair of cards' (a pack), 'a pair of arrows' (three). **Bede** originally meant a prayer; the modern sense of 'bead' arose by transfer of the name from the prayer counted to the round object used in counting. The beads of a modern rosary are arranged in decades, each decade consisting of ten small beads for the *Ave Marias* and a large ornamented one called a gaud, for the *Paternoster.*

The modern rosary, known as *Our Lady's Psalter*, consists of fifteen decades, in allusion to the one hundred and fifty psalms of the Psalter. But this may not have been in use in Chaucer's time. One of Hoccleve's best poems (*Minor Poems*, II, 16ff.) explains the origin of it and seems to imply that it was new. The rosaries of earlier times were mostly of two lengths, one of fifty, the other of no more than ten *Aves;* see Rock, *The Church of Our Fathers*, III, 328, and Addis and Arnold, *A Catholic Dict.* s. v. *rosary.* The shorter ones were carried in the hand or fastened to the little finger by a ring; note that carried by Chaucer in most pictures of him. The Religious still use the small rosaries on occasion. The longer ones used to be worn suspended about the arm, like the Prioress's, or fastened to a girdle, as is usual now. In ancient times rosaries were usually called paternosters. Among the records of Henry, earl of Derby, are several purchases of paternosters: "1 pr. paternosters de Cokyll et de Jaspre (40 *s*); 1 par paternosters de corall cum gaudees aur'." (Wylie, 162, 174.) The rosary of the Prioress seems not to have been very costly — *small* coral, gauded with green. This may indicate the comparative poverty of her nunnery, as does the fact that her Priest rode a foul and lean jade (VII, 4002–03).

162. Nothing in the description of the Prioress or her conversation indicates any interest in sexual love. **Amor** was constantly used for love divine. Rock (*Church of Our Fathers*, III, 202f.) gives examples of similar mottoes and of a "crowned M," alluding to Our Lady. William of Wykeham left by will "a pair of beads of gold, appended from a bracelet of gold, having these words engraved on them **I H S** [Jesus] **est amor meus"** (*ib.* III, 330, *n.* 80). Lowes pointed out that a "crowned A" often was used as Queen Anne's mark, but he rightly thought that a reference here to the Queen was not very probable.

163f. Line 163 begins as if Chaucer were going to describe the **Nun**, but he seems either not to have been much interested in her or not yet to have formed any clear conception of her, for not only does he fail to describe her here, but he has no word about her either before or after she tells her tale.

That the nun accompanying the Prioress should have been her **chapeleyne** was natural. The chaplain of a high official of a convent was a sort of private secretary. The duties of the chaplain of an abbot are indicated in the *Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelond* (tr. Clarke, in "The King's Classics"). In most Benedictine convents the abbess or prioress has a nun chaplain — not to be confused with a priest; see *Anglia*, iv, 238; *N and Q*, 7 ser. vi, 485; *Academy*, 1890, ii, 152; and *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Soc.), pp. 183ff. For further light on Prioress and Nun see Sister M. Madeleva, *Chaucer's Nuns and Other Essays*, and especially Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries.*

164. **and Preestes thre.** In spite of the last half of l. 164, it seems certain that there was only one priest. Only one is mentioned elsewhere (see VII,

3999); it would be quite absurd to have three; Chaucer says in l. 24 that there were nine and twenty pilgrims assembled at the Tabard, and this is exactly accurate if only one priest is counted. As we know, for other reasons, that Chaucer left *CT* unfinished, it seems highly probable that he intended to describe the Nun and the Nuns' Priest but never wrote more than

Another Nonne with hire hadde she
That was hire chapeleyne —

Who added **and preestes thre,** no one knows.

The convent at Stratford was founded for nine nuns and a prioress and had that number at the dissolution; apparently it never had more. The will of Elizabeth of Hainaut makes it clear that the confessor of the convent — the nun's priest — was the priest of the parish (see Manly, *New Light*, pp. 222f.).

165 ff. The **Monk.** The most interesting account we have of life in a large monastery in mediaeval England is Jocelyn of Brakelond's chronicle of abbot Samson's rule of St. Edmunds at Bury, one of the largest and richest of the English abbeys (see *Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelond*, ed. Clarke, "King's Classics" series, or Carlyle's *Past and Present*). It is difficult to form a conception of the enormous possessions of some of the wealthier abbeys and consequently of the degree to which the abbot and many of his chief officers were obliged to devote themselves to purely secular business. Jocelyn tells us that Samson's predecessor, Abbot Hugh, was "a kind and pious man, a good and religious monk, yet not wise or far-sighted in worldly affairs," and consequently "the townships and all the hundreds were set to farm, the forests were destroyed, the manor houses threatened to fall, everything daily got worse and worse." The abbey ran continually into debt, borrowing money from both Jews and Christians. Jocelyn speaks of debts totaling £2320 (equal in modern value to $174,000). When Abbot Samson deposed William the sacrist, he exhibited securities amounting to £3052 (= $228,900), besides the interest that had accrued — which was probably quite as great. "Behold," said he, "the good management of William, our sacrist; look at the multitude of securities signed with his seal, whereby he has pledged silken copes, dalmatics, censers of silver, and books ornamented with gold, without the knowledge of the convent, all which I have redeemed and restored to you." He also destroyed the houses of the sacrist because of the "frequent wine-bibbings and certain other acts not to be named, which he [Samson], with grief and indignation, had witnessed while he was sub-sacrist." Samson drew up a written survey of the manors, including rents due from freemen, the names of the laborers and their tenements, and the services due from each. He repaired the old halls and unroofed houses, built new chapels and inner chambers and upper stories in many places where only barns had been before. "He also inclosed many parks, which he replenished with beasts of chase, keeping a huntsman with dogs; and upon the visit of any person of quality, sat with his monks in some walk of the wood, and sometimes saw the coursing of the dogs: but I never saw him take part in the sport."

It is not strange that the men upon whom the management of the larger

monasteries devolved had to give most of their time to worldly affairs or that some of them acquired the tastes and habits of secular lords.

165. **for the maistrie** is an adverbial phrase modifying **fair.** Tyrwhitt says that in old medical books it was "applied to such medicines as we usually call sovereign, excellent above all others." It therefore does not mean 'to show his excellence,' as Skeat suggests; 'a fair for the maistrye' means merely 'an extremely fine one.'

166. **outridere** is well illustrated by the lines about the able young monk in the Shipman's Tale:

> This noble monk of which I yow devyse
> Hath of his abbot as hym list licence —
> Bycause he was a man of heigh prudence
> And eek an officer — out for to ryde
> To seen hir graunges and hire bernes wyde.
> — VII, 1252–56

170. **gynglen,** jingle. Professor Skeat notes that "fashionable riders were in the habit of hanging small bells on the bridles and harness of their horses," and quotes passages to show that this was done both by laymen and by worldly members of the clergy.

172. A **celle** was a subordinate monastery, not necessarily a small one. Some of the richest priories in England were cells of abbeys in France, notably of the abbeys of Cluny and Fécamp. The head of any subordinate house would be called a prior. Whether the Monk was a prior or not, he was at least fit to be prior or even abbot (l. 167), and his **celle** was by no means a small one (l. 168).

173. In the fourteenth century the religious orders of the church were organized under one or another of four rules, the Basilian, the Augustinian, the Benedictine, and the Franciscan. The rule of St. Benedict was first promulgated at Monte Casino, Italy, where St. Benedict founded his first monastery in A.D. 529. St. Maurus was believed to have introduced the rule into France, where the success of the Benedictine order was so great that he came to be regarded as almost equal with St. Benedict in the establishment of monasticism. For further information see *Cath Encycl* or Addis and Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*.

176. **the space,** used adverbially, = 'meanwhile,' but the expression was not very familiar in the fifteenth century, for many of the MSS substitute **trace** for it.

177ff. For an interesting and valuable discussion of the whole passage by Professor Emerson, see *MPh*, I, 105–15. The idea that hunters were not holy men goes back to St. Jerome's comment on Ps. 90: "Esau was a hunter, therefore he was a sinner, and indeed we do not find in the Holy Scriptures a single pious hunter. Pious fishermen we do find." Chaucer may have read discussions of the subject in many learned writers, but the saying was well known to hunters, and was resented by them. The Duke of York, in the

prologue to his translation of the famous hunting treatise, *The Master of Game*, promises to prove "that the life of no man that useth gentle game and disport be less displeasable unto God than the life of a perfect and skilful hunter, or from which more good cometh" (Baillie-Grohman, p. 4).

Some editors change **recchelees** (l. 179) to **cloysterles**, which is the reading of only one manuscript and was due to the scribe's failure to understand **recchelees**. Koch inadvisedly emended to **reuleless**. **Recchelees** is frequently applied to persons neglectful of their duties, and is more than once applied to vagabonds. The best-known example of the word in the sense of 'vagabond' is that in *Gammer Gurton's Nedle*, II, i, 72. For many other quotations see Emerson in *MPh*, I, 110ff. Ecclesiastical authorities were continually disturbed by monks who left their cloisters and clerics who wandered free from jurisdiction. The 'text' alluded to is attributed in the decretals to Pope Eugenius: "sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus." It is quoted by many mediaeval authors, including Gower.

181. **This is to seyn** introduces a specification of **recchelees.**

184. **What** = 'why.'

187. St. Augustine's treatise *De Opere Monachorum*, written at the request of Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, because of the conduct of monks who, under pretext of contemplation, indulged in idleness, became the standard authority for monastic life; cf. *Cath Encycl*, II, 79.

191. Note that **prikyng** does not mean 'hard riding,' as is commonly supposed, but 'tracking the hare, not by scent but by footprints' (cf. *OED*). The mediaeval esteem for hare hunting is well indicated by Machaut's lines:

> C'est honneur, solas, et joie;
> C'est uns fais que noblesse prise,
> Qui est de gracieuse emprise
> — *Jug. dou roy de Navarre*, 510–12.

193ff. The dress of the Monk must have been very expensive. Furs and fur-lined garments were much worn in the Middle Ages, because the houses were not well heated in winter, but the fine gray fur with which the Monk's sleeves were trimmed was not for comfort only but for ornament. Under ordinary circumstances monks were forbidden to wear boots, but this prohibition, like most others, was often violated. Tyrwhitt quotes from a writer of the thirteenth century part of a description of a worldly abbot whose boots must have been much like those worn by the Monk: "He wore boots without a wrinkle, as if they had been born on his feet" (ocreas habebat in cruribus quasi innatae essent, sine plica porrectas).

200. **in good poynt:** cf. *embonpoint.*

202. (Eyes) 'that gleamed like the furnace of a cauldron'; cf. *OED*, **lead**, sb [1], 5 a and **steam**, v, 2: "To emit a flame, glow." Chaucer may have had in mind the furnaces kept burning day and night under salt pans to evaporate the water; cf. *EDD*, s. v. **lead.** Brusendorff's objections are frivolous, and

his idea that the passage means "His head steamed as a furnace does when a piece of lead is put into it" is to be rejected.

206. The regulations of the monastic orders prescribed only plain food for monks, and meats were not to be eaten by them except when ill or feeble, but the wealthier monks had long disregarded this regulation. At Winchester in the twelfth century they complained because their dinner had been reduced to thirteen courses (Coulton, *Social Life*, p. 118).

208ff. The **Frere.** The four orders referred to in l. 210 were: 1. The Dominicans, or preaching friars — also called Iacobini — founded by St. Dominic in Spain in 1206. They came to England in 1221, and from the color of their gowns were known as Black Friars. 2. The Franciscans, Fratres minores, founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi. They first came to England in 1224, and were commonly called Grey Friars. 3. The Carmelites, or White Friars, who claimed to have been instituted by Elijah and to have had an establishment at Mount Carmel ever since his day. Their rule was formulated in 1209, and they held their first chapter in England in 1245. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries they were very flourishing, and had fifty-two houses in England. 4. The Augustine or Austin friars (or hermits), who claimed historical descent from St. Augustine of Hippo, but were not organized into an order until 1256. They had thirty-two houses in England at the dissolution. These four orders of friars were known preëminently as the Four Orders. All of them had been established as part of the great thirteenth century movement to reform abuses which had arisen in the monastic orders, chiefly through the accumulation of wealth. In order to prevent similar abuses, the friars were forbidden to hold property, not only individually but even as a community. Houses for them to live in were, however, necessary, and the prohibition was evaded by having the property held for them. Ambitious men soon crept into the order, and from the middle of the thirteenth century to the Reformation the friars were the object of attack for corrupt practices of all sorts. Wyclif and his followers called all the friars 'children of Caim' (Cain), from the initials of Carmelitae, Augustini, Iacobini, Minores.

Friars differ from monks primarily in the fact that the latter were organized for a life of retirement and meditation (**vita contemplativa**), the former for lives of active service to men (**vita activa**).

212. Hinckley approves of Flügel's attempt (*JGP*, I, 118ff.) to save the Friar's reputation by suggesting that this line means that the Friar married runaway couples free of charge. But the picture of him is full of innuendoes.

216. **frankeleyns.** Franklins were a class of large landholders, ranking in the feudal system immediately below barons. In the fourteenth century the term seems to have been rare in the south of England, but was still very common in the north. Many persons are designated as franklins in the Yorkshire Subsidy Roll for 1380. For evidence that Chaucer thought of the Friar as coming from Yorkshire, see the discussion of the quarrel between the Friar and the Summoner, note on III, 1265–1300.

218–20. A great cause of complaint by the priests against the friars was that they were licensed to hear confessions and give absolution in all cases, even in those beyond the jurisdiction of the parish priest. Wyclif says: "For comynly if ther be any cursid jurour [swearer], extorsioner, or avoutrer [adulterer], he wil not be schryven at his owne curat, bot go to a flatryng frere, that will asoyle hym falsely for a litel money by yeere, thof he be not in wille to make restitucioun and leeve his cursid synne."

224. **pitaunce.** Originally a **pitaunce** was a portion of food added to the regular monastic fare. In the course of time it came to mean merely a gift.

227f. Here the first **he** refers to **man,** the second and third refer to the Friar.

233. The complaint that the friars carried small inexpensive presents like knives and pins to win the favor of the women was often made in contemporary satire. Compare the "Song against the Friars" (Wright, *Political Poems*, I, 264–65):

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,
With gyrdles, gloves, for wenches and wyves;
Bot ever bacward the husband thryves
  Ther thai are haunted tille.

. . . . . .

Ther is no pedler that pak can bere,
That half so dere can selle his gere,
Then a frer can do.
For if he gife a wyfe a knyfe
  That cost bot penys two,
Worthe ten knyves, so mot I thryfe,
  He wyl have er he go.

Hinckley quotes a passage of similar import from Matthew, *English Works of Wyclif*, p. 12.

239. **champion.** Explained by Skeat and others as 'a professional fighter in judicial lists,' but here the word has its modern meaning, as it has often in the contemporary *Tale of Gamelyn* (ll. 203–18, 219, 227), where the champion is merely an expert wrestler.

252. After this line a few MSS have two lines which do not appear in the other MSS:

And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt,
Noon of his brethren cam ther in his haunt.

Some scholars regard them as genuine, apparently because they seem not unworthy of Chaucer, but in the present state of our knowledge of the relations of the MSS it is impossible to trace the tradition back to Chaucer. **Ferme** means 'fixed payment.'

254. **In principio.** *John*, i, 1–14, seems to have been used as a religious exercise by the friars in their visits, even as late as the sixteenth century, as

is proved by Tyndale's reference to "the limiters saying of *In principio erat verbum*, from house to house"; cf. further, *MLN*, XXIX, 141–42 and *PMLA*, XXXVII, 208–15.

256. This seems to have been proverbial, both in French and in English. *RR* has "miex vaut mes porchas que ma rente," and a character in the *Towneley Plays* says:

> He gettis more by purches
> Then by his fre rent.

rent is regular income. Apparently it does not here mean what the Friar paid for his limitation; cf. *MLN*, XXIII, 142–44, *MPh*, VII, 475–77. **Purchas** originally meant 'property obtained in any way except by inheritance or the mere act of law.' The word was often used with a suggestion of fraud.

258. **love dayes.** These were days set apart for the adjustment of complaints by arbitration. From a passage in *PP* (A, iii, 154) it appears that the arbitrators were not always averse to taking bribes to pervert justice.

259. **cloysterer:** the poor brethren who remained in the cloister, devoted to their religious duties, were called "cloisterers."

264. This affectation is not typical, but personal.

269. The name **Huberd** is by no means common in the fourteenth century. Indeed I do not recall a single instance of it in the records of the south of England during Chaucer's lifetime.

270ff. The **Marchant** is in some respects undoubtedly a typical figure, but not all merchants were in debt, not all of them violated the king's laws by selling foreign money in exchange, and not all of them were specially interested in keeping clear of pirates the route between Middelburg and Orwell. Knott (*Ph2*, I, 2–16) has recently made a careful study of the details of the Merchant's portrait, and has suggested that he belonged to the city of Ipswich, of which Orwell was the seaport. He might have added that the connection of Chaucer's family with Ipswich may have given him a special interest in this picturesque but not entirely admirable person.

The Merchant was not an ordinary shopkeeper, but a wholesale merchant engaged in the export and import trade. Knott and all other scholars have regarded him as trading at the Staple; but he may equally well have been a member of the company of Merchants Adventurers, who originally organized in the thirteenth century under the name of "The Fraternity of St. Thomas" for trade between England and the Low Countries. They seem to have moved from Bruges to Middelburg immediately after the death of Louis de Male, in 1384; see Manly, *New Light*, pp. 181–200. The fact that the Merchants Adventurers were "the Fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury" may be a reason for the Merchant's wish to visit St. Thomas's shrine.

The dress and appearance of the Merchant were designed to impress the public with a sense, not of his sedateness, but of his wealth. A **forked berd** was a fashionable cut, as is shown by many pictures and effigies of the time. **Motlee** was, as we know, both from records of the time and from the picture

of the Merchant in the Ellesmere MS, a rich cloth in which was woven a figured design, sometimes in the same color as the ground, sometimes in another. **Flaundryssh beaver** hats were worn by the upper classes. They were of various shapes and prices. One bought by Henry, earl of Derby, when he was eighteen years old cost 3 *s.* 4 *d.* (Wylie, IV, 167.) The Merchant may have bought his abroad; but such hats could be bought in London.

Hye on horse he sat (271) is an expression frequently used in the Middle Ages concerning knights and others who wished to make an imposing appearance on horseback. Its meaning is perhaps illustrated by the well-known picture of Bernabo Visconti, which shows him seated in a very high saddle.

274f. **resons** has not its modern meaning, but is a term for remarks in general, and **solempnely** carries no hint of dullness, but only of eloquence and perhaps pomposity.

Some editors have explained **sownynge** as meaning 'tending to,' but this meaning would require an in after **sownynge,** as in l. 307. Here the word means only 'proclaiming,' 'talking about.'

276f. The keeping of the sea against pirates and privateers was essential to the safety of the foreign trade. *The Libel of English Policy*, a famous fifteenth century pamphlet (in verse), is chiefly devoted to this subject; cf. especially the Prologue (Wright, *Pol. Poems and Songs*, II, 157–59). Edward III had asserted his claim to the title of Lord of the English Seas, and special taxes were imposed on merchandise for the maintenance of a force to protect English trade (Stubbs, *Const. Hist. of Engl.*, II, 399, 554–56).

Except during periods of truce between England and France, privateers of each nation freely attacked the ships of the other. Between 1382 and 1389 hostilities were so active that the danger was especially great. As England had no navy, the keeping of the sea was farmed out to private persons. Thus on May 6, 1383, two wealthy London merchants, Gilbert Maufeld (who lent Chaucer money in 1392) and Robert Parys, and two mariners were appointed to keep the seas between Winchelsea and Berwick-on-Tweed for a year and a half. For this they were to receive 2500 marks and the 6 *d.* in the pound and the 2 *s.* a tun granted to the king in Parliament (except the money taken at Dover) and one half of all fines levied for non-payment (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1381–85, p. 278).

Orewelle is frequently mentioned as an important harbor; for example, Queen Isabella landed there on her return to England in 1326, and Edward III assembled his ships there for his voyage to Flanders and Germany in 1338. Very near it was Harwich, incorporated under Edward II but represented in Parliament only in 17 Ed. III. A little farther up the river Orwell, where it was joined by the Gipping, lay Ipswich, one of the most active commercial towns on the east coast. Chaucer's father was born there and owned property in the very heart of the town, but we have no evidence that Geoffrey Chaucer had any special interest in the town and its affairs. It and Orwell were, however, the nearest important English towns to the Flemish port of Middelburg, where the English Merchant Adventurers settled after being driven out of Bruges by Philippe le Hardi in 1384; see note on ll. 270ff.

During the years 1384–88, the Wool Staple — that is, the market through which English merchants could sell wool to the Continent — was by act of parliament placed at Middelburg. As all scholars had regarded the Merchant as a merchant of the staple, Hales (*Folia Litteraria*, 100f.) argued that Chaucer must have written the Prologue during this period. Although this date is possible enough for some parts of the Prologue, not much weight is now attached to the argument; partly because the composition of *CT*, and even of the Prologue itself, apparently extended over several years, and partly because trading through the Staple was never exclusive. If the Merchant belonged, not to the Staple, but to the Merchant Adventurers (see above), there is additional reason for abandoning the argument based on these two lines.

278. The selling of foreign money in exchange was reserved by law to the Royal Exchange, and private persons were forbidden under serious penalties to make exchanges for profit. The **sheeldes** were the gold coins known as 'florins d'escu,' from a shield stamped on one side of them. Their nominal value was 3 *s.* 6 *d.*

281. The Middle Ages regarded it as unnatural that money should breed money, and the Church passed severe laws against the taking of interest, regarding all interest as usury. These laws resulted partly in placing financial transactions largely in the hands of the Jews and Lombards (or persons so called), and partly in evasions of the letter of the law. Knott discusses the financial transactions of the king with Italian banking companies and with native syndicates, in one of which Chaucer's stepfather, Richard, participated to the extent of 500 *l.* Whether the Merchant's **bargaynes** and **chevyssaunces** were private transactions or loans to the king we have, as Knott points out, no means of knowing, but ll. 279–80 seem to imply that he was borrowing to carry on his business. The lending of money to private persons, with or without security was, however, an important part of the business of some merchants. The daybook of one of these, Gilbert Maufeld, has been preserved. The book covers 1390–95, during which years he lent money to more than thirty of the persons whose names appear in the Chaucer *LR*, including Chaucer himself, John Gower, Esquire, and Henry Scogan. Many other names appear, ranging from those of servants and small tradesmen to those of bishops and lords. But prosperous as Maufeld seems to have been at this time, he died in debt to the king (cf. *MPh*, XXIV, pp. 249ff.).

284. Chaucer's profession of ignorance of the Merchant's name is intelligible enough in view of the insinuations he has made concerning his character.

285ff. There is no reason to believe that the **Clerk** of Oxford was intended as a portrait of Chaucer himself as a young man. We have as yet no evidence that Chaucer ever attended either of the universities. His higher education seems rather to have been obtained at the Temple (see *Introd.*, pp. 11–13). In only one respect, so far as we know, does the Clerk resemble Chaucer, and that is in his love of books; cf. ll. 293–96 and *LGW* (G), 271–74. Moreover it must not be supposed that all university students of the fourteenth century were sedate and serious persons like the Clerk. The innumerable riots be-

tween them and the townsmen indicate that many of them were much like the most careless and reckless of modern students (cf. Chaucer's account of one of them, I, 3190–3220).

The mediaeval university curriculum consisted of two parts. The first, called the trivium, included grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The second, or quadrivium, included arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, and in Chaucer's time natural and moral philosophy. A student who had completed the trivium was ready for the degree of Bachelor of Arts; after which he might continue in residence for four years, studying and taking a small part in teaching before he became qualified for the degree of Master of Arts. For a further degree in theology ten years work was required; for canon or civil law eight; for medicine five years of reading and two years of practice. The emphasis on logic and philosophy indicates that Chaucer's Clerk had taken his B.A. degree and was pursuing his studies for the M.A.; cf. especially Jones, *PLMA*, XXVII, 106–15.

Aristotle's works were the chief authorities for both natural and moral philosophy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and indeed down to the end of the sixteenth century. The mediaeval scholars, however, did not know Aristotle in the original versions, but only in Latin translations made from Arabic translations from the original Greek. Many of these translations were so inaccurate that the great thirteenth century scholar Roger Bacon declared that the world would be benefited by the total destruction of them.

The Clerk was obviously not rich, for he was dependent upon the contributions of his friends for his living, but ll. 299–300 indicate that his poverty was due, not to any lack of liberality on the part of his friends, but to his own extravagance in the purchase of books. Very few persons at that time possessed as many as twenty books. Chaucer's library of sixty (*LGW* (G), 273) was very exceptional. Coulton (*Social Life*, p. 99), summarizing the wills of sixty testators, finds that they owned altogether one hundred and thirty-eight books, and that the largest library consisted of fourteen volumes. Coulton calculates that the twenty volumes of Aristotle which Chaucer's Clerk had — or wished for — could hardly have cost less than the value of three ordinary citizens' houses in a great town. But the cost of making books varied very widely, and schoolbooks were apparently not as expensive as Bibles, which were the basis of Coulton's calculation. Wylie (IV, 172) quotes from the records of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1395–96 the purchase of seven books of grammar bound in one volume, bought in London for the young lord, Henry, for 4 *s.* In 1324 the Countess of Clare kept a scriptor for sixteen weeks writing *Vitae Patrum*, paying him 8 *s.*; i.e., 6 *d.* a week plus board and lodging. He wrote 3300 words a day (Rogers, *Hist. Agr. and Prices*, II, 612; Coulton, *Social Life*, p. 102).

296. The clerk Nicholas, of *MiT*, would have preferred the robes and musical instruments; cf. I, 3203–20.

297. **philosophre.** In the Middle Ages this term covered a wide range, as both theoretical and practical ethics and the natural sciences, genuine and false (astrology and alchemy), were included under philosophy. Chaucer's

little joke turns on the claim of the alchemists to be able to change the baser metals into gold.

299ff. Students in the universities were often aided, not only by their personal friends, but by others; but cf. Jones, *ut sup. Letter Book F* (p. 209) contains letters dated May 1, 1350, from the lord mayor to the pope and various others in behalf of Richard de Cleaungre, "a simple but learned clerk," who was held in high esteem at Oxford. The expenses of a university student in 1374, according to Riley, *Memorials*, p. 379, were: board 2 *s.* per week, teaching two marks (26 *s.* 8 *d.*) per year, clothing 40 *s.* per year, sundries 20 *s.* per year (cf. also *Letter Book G*, p. 322). In 1394–95 room rent for one term for a student not holding a scholarship was 3 *s.* 4 *d.* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. *Coll. III*, 19), but a large proportion of the students at the universities in the Middle Ages were members of religious orders or secular persons supported by them. These students lived in halls established for their benefit; cf. Durham College Rolls (Oxf. Hist. Soc. *Misc. III*, *passim*). "According to a papal bull of 1361 printed by Lewis (*Life of Wyclif*, p. 4) Sir William Felton in 1361 incorporated the parish church of Abbotesley with Balliol Hall, thus increasing the number of scholars, aiding their library, supplying clothing and twelve farthings a week; and providing that they shall be at liberty to remain in the Hall, whether they are masters and doctors or not, until they obtain a sufficient church living" (Lechler-Lorimer, *Life of Wiclif*, p. 99). The royal household accounts also regularly contain allowances for the king's scholars at King's Hall, Cambridge. On the whole subject see Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, vol. ii and R. S. Rait, *Life in the Mediaeval Universities*.

305. **in forme and reverence,** i.e. 'formally and respectfully' (Hinckley).

307. **Sownynge in moral vertu,** 'making for righteousness, tending to virtue.'

309ff. The Man of Law is described as not merely a lawyer, but a member of the highest grade or degree, **sergeant of the lawe,** of which there were comparatively few. Men were summoned to this degree by special writ from the king, and only those were eligible who had devoted at least sixteen years to the study and practice of the law. The ablest of those who were thus qualified were, on recommendation by the judges of the king's court, summoned by royal writ to become sergeants. The ceremonies connected with the making of sergeants were very elaborate and very expensive. They lasted a whole week, and cost so much that a penalty of 1000 *l.* was imposed for failure to accept the summons to the degree. Sir John Fortescue, our earliest authority on the subject, compares the splendor of the ceremonies and feasts to those attending the coronation of a king. From the sergeants were chosen the judges of the king's courts and the chief baron of the exchequer.

Among the score or so of lawyers who were sergeants at the time Chaucer wrote, the vast majority can easily be set aside as in one respect or another not answering to the description given of the sergeant who belonged to the Canterbury group. Many circumstances seem to indicate that in painting the portrait he may have had in mind Thomas Pynchbek, one of the most

eminent lawyers of the time, who was especially noted not only for his learning but also for his accumulation of landed property (cf. 318–20). Perhaps there is a pun on his name in l. 326; cf. for details of the argument, Manly, *New Light*, pp. 131–57. It is significant that this man, Thomas Pynchbek, came from a little village in Lincolnshire very near the country home of Chaucer's sister-in-law, Katherine Swynford. A series of records, discovered after this book was sent to the printer shows Chaucer as being prosecuted in 1388 by John Churchman for a debt of five marks. One of the writs to arrest him was signed by Thomas Pynchbek, as chief baron of the exchequer.

310. **at the parvys.** Editors have always explained this as a reference to the porch of St. Paul's, where lawyers were accustomed in the sixteenth century to meet their clients for consultation. But this explanation seems doubtful. In the first place, it is not certain that St. Paul's was so used in the fourteenth century. **Paradisus** and its vernacular equivalent **parvys** were in common use, and there was a **paradisus** at Westminster, mentioned in fourteenth century building accounts recorded in Rymer's *Foedera* (see *Syllabus*, Index, under *Westminster*). According to a document of May 17, 1550, it was then used for the court of the Exchequer (Rymer, O, XV, 233 or H, VI, pt. iii, 190). There is, however, still another explanation that demands consideration. The great lawyer John Selden, in a note on Fortescue's *De Laudibus Legum Angliae* (ed. 1737, p. 120), after quoting this passage from Chaucer, says: "It signifies an Afternoon Exercise or Moot, to the Instruction of young Students, bearing the same name originally (I guess) with **Parvisiae** in Oxford, as they call their Sitting Generals in the Schools in the Afternoon." He quotes Wake, *Musae Regnantes* for this usage: "Has, quia iis inferiores, **Parvas**, jam etiam corrupto nomine, **Parvisias** dicere consuevimus." See also the quotations in *OED* (**Parvis**, 2) under 1530, 1706, and 1886, with the concluding remarks.

As the emphasis is on the Man of Law's wisdom, either of the two last explanations would seem preferable to the first: that is, either 'he had often sat in the court of the Exchequer,' or 'he had often presided at the moots of the students in the inns of court.' I think the last the more probable.

314f. The courts of **assise** were the regular county courts, composed of justices appointed by special commission to determine suits of various sorts. The **patente** was an open letter from the king, appointing a person as justice (the patent appointing Chaucer one of the justices of the peace for Kent is in *LR*, No. 183; the commission is No. 188). A **pleyn commissioun** empowered the justices named to hear cases of all sorts.

For G. J. Turner's criticisms of Stubbs' account of the various commissions issued to the justices of assize, see *Scottish Hist. Rev.* 1914, p. 419.

317. **robes** were a regular part of the compensation paid to professional men, such as lawyers and doctors (cf. note on l. 442). A robe was not a mere cloak but a whole suit of clothing. The scarcity of money in the Middle Ages explains the frequency with which payments of various sorts are made in cloth, cups, jewelry, etc., instead of in money; cf. Wylie, iv, 214.

318. Some scholars think that **purchasour** has here a double meaning. I cannot find that it is ever used of an agent. The implication here seems to be simply that the Man of Law was so skilful that no matter by what tenure land was held, he could bring about its transfer to himself by as good title as if it were held in fee simple (that is, absolutely).

323f. English law has always been largely a matter of precedent. The Man of Law knew accurately (**in termes**) the cases and the decisions from the time of William the Conqueror. The following quotations from Maitland's *Select Pleas of the Crown* (Selden Soc.) will illustrate the present passage: "Almost to the extreme limit of legal memory, almost to the coronation day of Richard I extends the series of our yet extant Plea Rolls" (p. vii). "If the judicial records of the thirteenth century were printed in a hundred volumes, those volumes would be stout" (p. viii).

328. A **medlee cote** might be of a single color; cf. "two pieces of cloth of appel blom medle" (*Letter Book F*, 262), a surcoat of "broun medle" (*ibid.* 266). Lipson, *Hist. of the Engl. Woollen and Worsted Industries*, p. 142, says: "Sometimes the wool was dyed after it was washed but before it was woven, wool-dyed cloth being termed 'medley cloth.'" A special feature of medlee was that it had not a plain surface, but was woven in stripes. Some medlee was, however, particolored, and this may have been the case with the Man of Law's coat, for the sergeant's official robes were of brown and green stripes; see the 15th century pictures of the law courts in *Arch.* XXIX.

329. Originally **barres**, it seems, were metal strips placed across the **ceint**, or girdle; but smaller pieces of metal, perforated to receive the tongue of a buckle, were later called by the same name.

331f. The traveling companion of the Man of Law was the **Frankeleyn**, a character whose traits are unmistakably individual. It would seem, therefore, that if one could find a large landholder who was a neighbor of the Man of Law and who had a public career as sheriff, pleader, and knight of the shire in parliament, one would be justified in suspecting that his portrait also was drawn from a living model. Such a duplication of the career of the Franklin is afforded by Sir John Bussy, who was knight of the shire in 1383, 1388, and every other parliament of Richard's reign. He was certainly sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1384 and 1385, and according to some authorities in other years also. Year after year he sat on commissions of the peace, twice with Pynchbek, and always with men commonly associated with Pynchbek. He lived in Kesteven, only a short distance from Pynchbek's home, where his family had owned land for at least more than a century.

The Franklin was a wealthy country gentleman, and though clearly not a knight banneret, he may have had the rank of knight bachelor; see above, note on 216.

There is no reason for assigning the Franklin to Kent, as some editors have done. If he had lived in Kent he would probably not have gone to London to begin a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

332. The English daisy, crimson-tipped, affords a suggestive comparison for the Franklin's white beard against the background of his red face.

333. **complexion.** This is primarily a technical term, meaning temperament. Ancient physiologists classified men under four temperaments, according to the predominance of one or another of the so-called humors, or fluids. The sanguine complexion or temperament resulted from the predominance of blood, and was described as hot and moist; the phlegmatic from the predominance of phlegm, and was called cold and moist; the bilious from the predominance of bile, and was called hot and dry; the melancholic from the predominance of black bile, and was called cold and dry. As the humors determined not only the temperaments but the appearance of persons, "complexion" developed the meaning it has in modern English.

334. Before coffee and tea were introduced into England, beer and wine were in common use as morning drinks. This line does not imply that the Franklin was a drunkard. Recipes for making **sops in wine** are given in the *Two Fifteenth Century Cook Books* (*EETS*), pp. 11 and 90.

In Cornwall a species of apple is called "Sops in Wine" (*N and Q*, x, 8, 249) but the Franklin had probably not heard, "An apple a day," etc.

340. St. Julian was the patron saint of hospitality. The mediaeval belief in his power is well illustrated by a passage in the *Decamerone* (II, 2):

> And pray, sir, (said one of the rogues) what sort of prayers do you use when you are upon a journey? In truth, answered Rinaldo, I know little of those matters, and am master of very few prayers; but I live in an old-fashioned way, and can tell that one hundred cents make a dollar; but nevertheless on a journey I have always been accustomed to say in the morning a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria for the souls of the father and mother of St. Julian; after which I pray God and him to give me good lodging for the coming night. And many a time have I been in great danger, but have always escaped, and when night came on, I always had a good lodging, which favor I firmly believe St. Julian obtained of God for me, nor do I think I should ever travel serenely or have good lodging at night were I to forget this prayer.

Hospitality was practiced so extravagantly in the Middle Ages that Edward II thought it necessary to restrain it by ordinance (Bateson, *Mediaeval England*, p. 303), but the laws probably had little effect; cf. the epitaphs of two of the Lords Cobham emphasizing their hospitality, *Arch. Cant.* XI, 49ff.

It is interesting, though perhaps not significant, that a generation later Thomas Chaucer, the poet's son, was praised as the St. Julian "of his contree." And it will be remembered that although he was one of the wealthiest and most powerful persons in England, his status was that of a "frankeleyne":

> Saynt Julyan owre joye and all owre gloyre
> Come hoome ageyne lyche as we desyre
> To suppowaylen al the hole shyre.
>
> — "At the Departyng of Thomas Chaucer," pr. by Hammond, *MPh*, I, 333–36

341. **after oon,** 'up to the same high standard.'

343f. **bake mete . . . Of fissh and flessh:** 'pies of fish and flesh.' The changes of menu according to the seasons may be illustrated from Wynkyn de Wôrde in *Babees Book*, pp. 274–82. Russell's menu for a fifteenth century franklin's feast is given in the same volume, p. 170f.

350. In consequence of the many fast days on which it was not permitted to eat meat, ponds (**stewes**) to provide fresh fish, were maintained by all who could afford to have them. Some of these mediaeval stews are still in existence, for example that of The Vache, the ancient manor of Sir Philip la Vache, Chaucer's friend, at Chalfont St. Giles.

353. As the hall of a manor house was the principal living-room, the dining-table was usually a temporary affair set up for each meal and removed at its close. In a will of 1374 (*Sussex Arch. Coll.*, XXV, 150) such tables are called "mobiles" — "tabulis tam mobilibus quam aliis." Compare the directions for serving in a great house given in *A Fifteenth Century Courtesy Book* (EETS), p. 12:

> And the yemen and gromys or grome of the chambre . . . or the vsshere or gromes or grome . . . shall set vp bordes and make redy the stoles afore mete and haue hem redy at the settyng of bordes, and bryng hem redy to the marshall when he callithe, and also after mete bere away the bordes, trestelles, and stolis.

The Franklin is represented as being so hospitable that he kept a table always ready to serve anyone who might come in.

355f. The Franklin had presided at sessions of justices of the peace, just as Roger de Coverley did in a later day. He had also often represented his county in parliament.

357. An **anlaas** was a two-edged stiletto or dagger broad at the hilt and tapering to a point. A wound made by one is described as 1 inch long and 5 inches deep (Sharpe, *Cal. Cor. Rolls London 1300–1378*, p. 98). A **gipser** was originally, as the name indicates, a game bag, but in Chaucer's time it was applied to any sort of small bag, even a purse: "8 June 1376. Richard Bor accused of having deceitfully silvered a number of buttons and circlets of latten for purses called 'givesers.'" (*Letter Book H*, p. 34.)

359. The term **countour** had two meanings. It seems impossible to determine which was intended here. It might mean 'an accountant' (*BD*, 435). More probably it means 'a pleader in court.' In the London *Letter Book G*, p. 74, **countour** is translated 'pleader,' and non-professional pleaders are distinguished from men of law.

360. A **vavasour** was originally a 'vassal of vassals,' that is, one who held his property, not directly from the king, but from a tenant-in-chief. **Vavasours** ranked after knights bannerets. Harrison says: "It was a denomination applied unto all degrees of honour under the first three" (*Harrison's Description of England*, I, 113–15. New Shakspere Soc. ed.; cf. also *Arch.*, XXXIX (1),

191). The term seems not to have been in very common use in the South in the fourteenth century, and as a proper name it was rare in the South, though common in the North.

361ff. **Haberdashers** were of two kinds: haberdashers of hats, and haberdashers of small wares. The latter dealt in needles, tapes, buttons, and all sorts of miscellaneous small goods. **Tapicers** dealt sometimes in blankets. On the city tradesmen see pp. 70–72 above, and for a fuller account consult Kuhl, "Chaucer's Burgesses," *Trans. Wisc. Acad.* XVIII, 652–75. The essential fact is that these men all belonged to the 'non-victualing' trades, which in the conflict for political control of the city were partisans of John of Gaunt. Chaucer does not, however, choose representatives from any of the ten non-victualing companies which openly denounced Mayor Brembre in the Parliament of 1386. As he had been long associated with Brembre in the Customs, this may be significant.

363f. Although of different trades, these men belonged to the same **fraternitee**, or gild, doubtless a gild organized ostensibly for philanthropic and religious purposes. The patron saint of the Drapers was St. Thomas of Canterbury; possibly the "solempne and gret fraternitee" was dedicated to him. The returns of 1389 show the gilds to have been prevailingly religious, not merely burial or benefit clubs. Many gilds were founded for specific purposes, such as repairing a chapel, supporting a priest to assist the vicar, repairing bridges, educating boys, giving a play, etc. The terrible effects of the Black Death had made gilds very necessary. The distinction between religious and trade gilds would hardly have been understood in the Middle Ages, as all gilds were religious. On the whole subject compare Westlake, *Parish Gilds*, and of course Gross, *The Gild Merchant*.

376–77. Chaucer can never refrain from poking fun at the social ambitions of the women. The ceremonies of the vigils were held on the evening before the gild festival. Probably the reference is to these rather than to the ordinary church services on the vigils of saints' days.

379f. **for the nones.** Originally meaning 'for the once' (that is, 'for the occasion') this phrase developed all the meanings of which that phrase is capable. Sometimes it means 'for this occasion only'; sometimes it is an adjective meaning 'of the right sort'; sometimes an intensifying adverb practically equivalent to 'very.' Here it is doubtful whether Chaucer represents the **Cook** merely as being especially skilful or as being brought by the tradesmen for the express purpose of cooking their meals on the pilgrimage. As we have no account of what occurred at any of the stopping-places, we do not know whether the tradesmen had their own table or not (but cf. ll. 747ff.). On the whole subject of meals and manners in ancient inns the student can safely read Fynes Moryson's picturesque account, quoted in Harrison's *Description of England* (New Sh. Soc.), Appendix II, pp. lxxf.; for there can have been no great changes between Chaucer's time and Shakespeare's. The disreputable character of the Cook comes out in his tale and the conversation introducing it (I, 4325, 4420).

386. **mormal,** a cancerous sore; for a description of it and the method of cure, see Lanfranc's *Cirurgie* (EETS), pp. 293f., Arderne's *Fistula*, p. 53, and, for a full discussion, Curry, pp. 47–52.

387. **blankmanger.** Not the dish now called 'blanc-mange,' but capon minced with rice, milk, sugar, and almonds. See *Liber Cure Cocorum* (EETS), p. 9.

388ff. The **Shipman** has been regarded as a typical figure; but, with a skilful disclaimer of responsibility, Chaucer suggests that he came from Dartmouth; and curiously enough Dartmouth was very much in the public eye just at this time in connection with piracy. Its leading citizen John Hawley (or Hauley) had been several times cited before the King's council, of which Chaucer's friend Sir Lewis Clifford was a member, for piratical attacks on the vessels of friendly nations. Charges of this sort against Hawley and the men of Dartmouth appear in the Patent Rolls for 1386, 1387, 1388, and 1389, and their exploits are recorded by the chroniclers Knighton, Walsingham, and Malvern. But it seems probable that the event which all Chaucer's readers would recall at the mention of Dartmouth was the seizure — notwithstanding their possession of a safe conduct from Sir John de Roches, captain of Brest — of five French ships in the neighborhood of Brest, between the Forland and Penmark, by four vessels under the leadership of John Hawley and manned largely by Dartmouth seamen. Inasmuch as the honor of Sir Thomas Percy was involved in the matter, the case was tried in the Court of Chivalry — the same court in which Chaucer had himself been a witness. The proceedings lasted several years and the testimony, highly abbreviated, fills nine rolls of seventy-one skins of vellum.

Hawley himself was too distinguished a person, and perhaps too cultivated, to have been the original of the Shipman. If Chaucer had an individual in mind it was perhaps Peter Risshenden, who is recorded as the master of the *Maudeleyne* on Sept. 21, 1391, and who was with Hawley in the seizure of the vessels near Brest.

In any event, it may be noted that it would have been easy for anyone familiar with Dartmouth to identify the Shipman. According to the Subsidy Roll of 1377, Dartmouth contained, exclusive of the clergy and mendicants, only 506 persons above fourteen years of age.

390. **rouncy.** Hinckley has shown that the common opinion that **rouncy** means a poor horse is wrong, and brings evidence to prove that it means rather a great, strong horse. It has been suggested that the Shipman's horse was one of the regular post horses supplied for travel along the Canterbury Road. This may be true if the Shipman came by water to London, as seems probable.

395. **a good felawe;** cf. note on l. 653.

396. The precise manner in which the Shipman stole the wine can hardly be ascertained. Kölbing, *ES*, XXIV, 341, refers to the trick of Lazarillo de Tormes, who used a long straw to draw wine from the cask of his blind but suspicious master, but that is not very probable here.

401ff. The Shipman was expert in knowledge of tides, currents, the phases of the moon, the waters of harbors, and all other matters necessary for piloting a ship (**lodemenage**).

404. **Cartage.** Not the ancient Carthage in Africa, but probably Cartagena, or New Carthage, in southeastern Spain. Less likely is Cartaya, near the town of Lepe in Spain, from which much Spanish wine was imported into England.

410. For records of a Dartmouth ship called *the Magdeleine*, and the name of the master in 1379 and 1391, see the article by Karkeek, *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Soc.), pp. 484ff.

411ff. The high qualifications, mental and moral, demanded of a **Doctour of Phisik,** date at least from the time of Hippocrates; they are urged with great earnestness by both Lanfranc (pp. 8f. and 298) and Arderne (pp. 123, 141).

413. **To speke of phisik and of surgerye.** Curry (esp. p. 28) connects this phrase with **lyk** and understands Chaucer to represent the Doctor as having no equal for talking about his profession and his own eminent qualities. Largely upon the basis of this, he builds up a conception of the Doctor as a highly problematical character, probably in the main a fraud (see pp. 35f.). I take the phrase, not as a complementary infinitive, but as a loose expression, meaning 'with respect to,' or 'if anyone is speaking of'; cf. I, 142, 1829, IV, 211, etc. Consequently I regard the description of him, not as self-revelation, but as Chaucer's objective report on him; and I do not believe that the insinuations of ll. 427f., 438, and 442ff. are meant as singling him out for special reprobation. Many a man at the present day indulges in jibes at medical science and its practitioners who has the highest respect both for the science and the men.

That Chaucer's Doctor was not a charlatan seems to me quite certain. The authors he knew were those in highest professional esteem, and only those. His theories of physiology and medicine were those held by the best writers and practitioners. There is no hint of his reliance on quack handbooks or quack methods of treatment. Although his study was but little on the Bible, he is nowhere represented as resorting to the irreligious practices of "black magic" or to illegal medicines or operations.

414ff. Medicine is the child of magic. In Arabic the same word designated both, and all the old medical books contained both magical formulas and medical receipts; cf. Doutté, *Magie et Religion*, pp. 36ff. and on the whole subject see Thorndike, *Hist. of Magic in the Middle Ages*, and Gunther, *Early Science at Oxford*. On medicine in Chaucer cf. Lowes, "The Loveres Maladye of Hereos," *MPh* XI, 491ff., and Curry, *op. cit.*

Mediaeval medical science was largely derived from the Arabs, and although the divorce of it from magic had begun in Chaucer's time, it was by no means complete. Even so intelligent a surgeon as John Arderne gives in his book a charm against cramp, which was to be written on parchment, placed in a purse, and put on the neck of the patient, while those who stood by said the Lord's prayer and one to Our Lady Mary. He says: "I used to write it

in Greek letters that it might not be understood by the people," and adds, "and if anyone carries that charm written fairly in the name of God Almighty and believes without doubt, he will not be troubled with cramp" (*op. cit.* pp. 102ff.).

Astronomy in the Middle Ages included astrology (Introd. pp. 137–44), which — since it merely attempted to make use of natural forces — was regarded as **magyk natureel.** The **ymages** for which the doctor chose fortunate ascendants (see pp. 137–43 above) were certainly not the wax images described by most commentators on this passage. Those were, I think, used only in "black magic," with unlawful ceremonies, to injure persons represented by the images. See *The Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler* (Camden Soc.), and the accusations brought against the Duchess of Gloucester in 1441 (K. H. Vickers, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 271ff.). The **ymages** here meant are the astronomical or astrological images discussed by Thebit ben Corat (*Tractatus de Imaginibus*) of the ninth century and many later writers on astrology and medicine (cf. Thorndike, I, s. v. *Image*, esp. pp. 664–66, 388ff., 399–400, 673–74). They may be made of any substance; the important thing is that they should be made under a fortunate ascendant, that is, when the celestial body just rising in the east is favorable to the purpose intended and is in favorable "aspects" with other powerful and propitious stars and signs. So Cecco d'Ascoli in his *Comment on Alcabitius*, after giving the reasons why the triplicity of the signs Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius is nobler than all the other triplicities, says, "This is what Damascene meant in saying that medicines do not act because they are hot or cold, but because they are endowed with celestial virtue. . . . And in this manner images operate that are made to procure love, honor, or similar benefits; for if an image to procure love is made in the hour of Venus, Venus being in Pisces or in Taurus fortifying Venus, then in the pouring of the metal the due proportion of elements is obtained by this modal aspect, whence results the required quality in the thing itself" (*Il Commento di Cecco D'Ascoli all' Alcabizzo*, ed. Boffito, p. 26.).

420f. See note on I, 333.

423f. "It is impossible for a cirurgian for to kane a cure but-if he knowe the cause therof" (Lanfranc, p. 201; cf. also Arderne, pp. 56ff.).

429ff. The physicians mentioned in these lines were the medical authorities in greatest esteem in the fourteenth century. Among the small number of books forming the library of the faculty of medicine of New College, Oxford, about the year 1400 were the following: "*Contentum de libris Galieni; Passionarium Galieni; Razis in Almos; Averoys in collecta, Liber alter Ypocratis; Pars Gilbertini Anglici, cum aliis*"; and the following were chained in the library for common use: "*Galienus de electis, cum aliis; Collecta Averoys, cum aliis; Canon Avicennae; Gilbertinus; Bernardus de Methodo curandi morbos, cum aliis; Diascorides de summa medicina; Gadesden super affectibus; Rosa medicinae; Alia Rosa medicinae*" (Leach, "Wykeham's Books at New College," Oxf. Hist. Soc. *Coll.*, III, 242–44). Curry suggests that the Doctor is citing

mythical treatises. I see no reason for this insinuation. Even in the case of **the olde Esculapius** the allusion is probably, not to the *Herbarium* which Apuleius received from Esculapius and Chiron the centaur (cf. Thorndike, I, 597, n. 2), but to *Esculapii de morborum . . . origine, causis, descriptionibus, et cura liber*, which with *Trotulae curandarum aegritudinum mulierum . . . lib.* formed the *Experimentarius Medicinae*, published in folio by John Schott, 1544. The significant fact about Chaucer's list is that it contains ancient classical authorities (Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galienus), the most famous of the Arabian authorities (Averrois, Avicenna, Haly, Razis, and Serapion), as well as the modern European authorities, among whom the latest was the Englishman John Gaddesden, who was an instructor in Merton College, Oxford, and later court physician. Chaucer might have found the names of some of these writers in almost any mediaeval treatise on medicine, but Lounsbury's suggestion that Chaucer's reading was in general superficial is hardly borne out by the evidence. He was at any rate very familiar with mediaeval science, as is abundantly proved by Curry. Details concerning these physicians will be found in Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*.

435f. Arderne also (p. 4) urges moderation in diet and dress, but in regard to clothing he advises that it be not rich and gaudy but like that of a learned man: "Also dispose a leche hym that in clothes and othir apparalyngis be he honeste, not likkinyng hymself in apparalyng or beryng to mynistrallez, but in clothing and beryng shew he the maner of clerkes. For-why it semeth any discrete man ycladde with clerkis clothing for to occupie gentil mennez borde."

438. This line is difficult to interpret. On the one hand, from the time that the healing art was dissociated from the official priesthood, medicine has in all countries been regarded as unreligious, if not anti-religious. Note the Arabic classification together of doctors and sorcerers, and the widespread modern feeling that doctors are freethinkers. On the other hand, we cannot disregard the strong insistence of mediaeval physicians such as Lanfranc, on the necessity of piety and reliance on God; cf. Lanfranc (pp. 123, 141) and Arderne (pp. 2ff. and 7). Arderne's opinion is in no degree discounted by his remark (p. 8): "Also it spedeth that a leche kunne talke of gode talez and of honeste that may make the pacientes to laughe, as well of the bible as of other tragediez." The piety of Chaucer's Doctor seems, however, to have been questioned by more than one of the pilgrims (cf. VI, 307 and IV, 1810), for the **letuaries** were not in good repute. p. 484

442. Arderne not only insists upon a clear understanding in regard to the amount of the fee, but counsels that the surgeon boldly ask more or less according to the estate of the patient: "But ever be he ware of scarce askings, for over scarce askings setteth at naught both the market and the thing. Therefore ask ye competently, of a worthy man and a great an hundred marks or forty pounds, with robes and fees of an hundred shillings term of life by year. Of less men forty pounds, or forty marks ask ye without fees; and take ye not less than an hundred shillings. For never in all my life took I less than an hundred shillings for cure of that sickness" (p. 6; cf. 4ff. and note).

443f. "Aurum potabile" or drinkable gold was a highly esteemed medicine in the Middle Ages and early modern times. The alchemists gave many recipes for making it. Some physicians held that wine in which a heated gold plate had been several times cooled possessed rare virtue as medicine (Thorndike, II, 854). Chaucer slyly suggests this as a reason for the doctor's love of gold.

445ff. To search for a model for the **Wyf of Bath** may seem a quixotic and impossible undertaking; and as a matter of fact I shall not try to suggest a definite individual. But a curious indication of the accuracy of detail in Chaucer's work has come to light in the course of my study of her. It will be remembered that Chaucer does not say she comes from Bath, but "from beside Bath." Investigation of the history of the cloth industry in Bath shows that it had been practiced there from very ancient times, but there is no evidence that any of the neighboring villages were engaged in it. Just outside the north gate of the city, however, lay the church and parish known as "St. Michael's Without" or "St. Michael's juxta Bathon," a suburb largely given over to weaving. The road from London to Bath passes directly through the suburb, before entering the north gate of the city. St. Michael's church stands just outside the gate and opposite to it. On his journeys to North Petherton Chaucer could hardly have failed to travel this road; and interested as he must have been in wool and woolen manufactures, he could hardly have failed to learn of any specially picturesque inhabitant of St. Michael's Without, even if he did not meet her. It will be noted that, not only in Bath, but wherever the cloth industry flourished in England, women were prominent in it. There may be no significance in the fact that the records of Bath in the fourteenth century contain an unusually large number of instances of the name Alyson (cf. V 548, 804).

The encomium of lines 447f. is exaggerated and perhaps ironical, for the West Country weavers were not in very good repute, according to Atton and Holland (*The King's Customs*, p. 26), who cite an enactment of Richard's reign "that all West-Country cloth should be exposed for sale open, as merchants who had bought it by the bale and had taken it abroad had been in danger of their lives from the incensement of buyers who had found the bales deceptive." The cloth of Ypres and Ghent and other cities of the Low Countries was for centuries in the highest esteem.

449ff. The strife of women over precedence in going to the offering is cited as a common trait in *Mahieu*, ll. 1420ff.

453–55. Most editors think that Chaucer playfully exaggerates the weight of the Wife's headdress, but the pictures of the enormous structures which were sometimes in fashion suggest that there was little exaggeration, if any. See Fairholt, *History of Costume in England*, figs. 125, 129, 130, 151.

460. In ancient times marriages were celebrated at the church door; see Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, III, pt. 2, 172, Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, II, 134, and *La Tour*, p. 50.

463ff. **Jerusalem.** Various mediaeval spellings show that the second syllable of this word should be slurred. The Wife visited Boulogne in France, because of a famous shrine of the Virgin; the shrine of St. James in Galicia, because it was one of the three most frequented of holy places; Cologne, because of the relics of the Three Kings, which were, and still are, supposed to be kept there.

In *Mahieu*, one of the bitterest of the satires on women, the author declares that women commonly attend church and go on pilgrimages "en obeïssant a Venus"; numerous other testimonies are cited by Van Hamel in his edition, II, p. 166.

Cook (*MLN*, XXII, 126) quotes a passage from the *Victoria History of the County of Cornwall* showing that there was a regular service of ships from the southern ports of England for pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela.

468. In explanation of this line Professor Skeat refers to a present-day superstition that teeth set far apart are a sure sign of luck and travel. That the Wife was what our ancestors called *calida mulier* is undeniable, but the suggestion that **gat-tothed** mean 'goat-toothed, lascivious' has little to commend it. **Gat** is a regular form for 'goat' in northern English, but would hardly be used by Chaucer except in dialect.

Curry ("More about Chaucer's Wife of Bath," *PMLA*, XXXVII, 45) ascribes her possession of wide-set teeth to the influence of Mars in her horoscope, and quotes authorities on physiognomy to the effect that such teeth indicate a vain, bold, unfaithful, impious, and lascivious person.

473. Women rode astride in fourteenth century England until Queen Anne and her ladies introduced the new custom of sitting sidewise. In the beautiful series of pictures representing early fifteenth century life in the Duke de Berry's *Très Riches Heures*, the ladies of the aristocracy are represented as riding sidewise; see the reproduction, opp. p. 192.

475. Whether the remedies of love known to the Wife were derived from reading Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* may well be doubted. To **know the olde daunce** was fourteenth century slang in French as well as in English; cf. *RR*, l. 4300: "for she knewe all the olde daunce." It means she was past mistress of the art of love.

477ff. The **Person** evidently represents Chaucer's conception of the ideal priest. One of the pilgrims (II, 1173) takes him for a Lollard, and it is possible that John Wyclif may have furnished some hints for the portrait (cf. Tatlock, *MPh*, xiv, 257–68). Chaucer was undoubtedly closely associated with some of the leaders of the Lollard movement, and the most striking and characteristic features of the Parson's life and principles can be closely paralleled from the writings of Wyclif. But there were many orthodox priests in England at that time who might have furnished the essential traits of the picture and who, without being followers of Wyclif, were distinctly pious, and even puritanical. Moreover, orthodox churchmen had long described the ideal priest in terms very similar to those used by Chaucer. On the general subject of the Parson, see Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, pp. 64–66.

The parish of this good man was poor as well as wide. As the very term **person** implies that he was a rector, not a vicar or a curate (cf. *Lincoln Diocesan Docs.* EETS, p. 225), we may suppose that his poverty was due to the fact that the larger tithes were impropriated by some monastery or other patron. In many parishes the houses were **fer asonder**; the parish of Dinton (Bucks) was so large (3800 acres), that the inhabitants of the village of Ford clubbed together to pay a chaplain of their own (*English Register of Godstow*, EETS, pt. iii, Introd., pp. lxxvif.; on impropriations, cf. *ibid.*, p. lxxv).

486–90. The principal income of a parish was derived from the tithes and other fixed dues established by law. Properly this income was to be divided into four equal parts: one for the rector, one for the dependent clergy, one for the maintenance of the church buildings, and one for the poor. How greatly and in what ways the church funds were misappropriated is told in detail by Coulton, *The Medieval Village* (see the index, under *Dues*, *Parish*, *Tithes*). Parishioners who failed to pay their tithes were liable to excommunication, or cursing. In addition to tithes, special dues had to be paid on special occasions, such as marriages and deaths. Besides these the parishioners made voluntary **offerings**. Many of the clergy were rich, but many, like Chaucer's **Person**, were as poor as their parishoners.

497. Gower also has this idea:

> Crist wrought first and after taught. — (*CA*, II, 188).

507ff. The complaint was common that parish priests hired substitutes to perform the duties of the parish, and themselves went to London to obtain employment in singing masses in the chantry chapels of the city churches. In 1362 the Archbishop of Canterbury had fixed the salaries of chantry priests at five marks a year and those of parish chaplains at six marks. Eighteen years later Archbishop Sudbury increased these salaries to seven and eight marks respectively. The chantries — endowments for daily masses for a term of years or forever — were maintained sometimes by individuals, sometimes by gilds (cf. **bretherhed**, l. 511). The rector of a parish who hired a chaplain to perform his parish duties would of course take all the income of the parish above the six or eight marks paid to the chaplain. As almost everyone who died possessed of any property established a chantry for his own soul and for those of some of his relatives or friends, the demand for chantry priests was enormous. Even as early as 1345 (July 8) a letter, under the seal of the mayoralty, was sent to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, complaining of the lack of chantry priests to perform the duties of chantries founded by citizens in the City's Mother Church; cf. *Letter Book F*, p. 124. The supply of priests was terribly diminished by the ravages of the Plague in 1348–49, 1362, 1369 and 1376, with the result that many parishes were left without anyone to conduct religious services. On the whole subject of chantries see Westlake, *Parish Gilds*, pp. 46–48.

511. **bretherhed**; cf. Tatlock, *MLN*, xxxi, 139–42. Skeat's doubt of the use of **withholde** was unjustified, cf.:

Extorcioun, contek, ravine
Withholde ben of that covyne. — (*CA*, viii, 3015f.)

526. **a spiced conscience** seems to be one that has been sophisticated in some way; cf. the quotations in *OED*.

529ff. As his brother was a priest, it is probable that the **Plowman** was not a serf but a free laborer, perhaps owning a horse and cart and working for wages.

541. The **tabard** was originally a rich coat worn by nobles and heralds (see note on l. 20, above), but by Chaucer's time the name was applied also to the blouse or smock worn by poor laborers; see especially the episode in Wright's *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 61–63, in which the priest demands the tabard from the poor man's back in payment for a mass to protect him from the temptations of the fiend.

On Dec. 28, 1377, the king granted a pardon to Elena Clytero for having entered the house of Richard Couper at Cranefield and there stolen four sheets, value 6 *d.*; a coat, value 10 *d.*; a pair of paternosters, value 12 *d.*; and a tabard, value 8 *d.* (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1377–81, p. 86.)

Persons of wealth and rank usually rode horses, not mares.

542–44. Some scholars think that the persons named in these lines were not in Chaucer's original plan, but were added as an afterthought; see Hammond, pp. 254f. This seems doubtful. The **Reve**, the **Millere**, the **Pardonere**, the **Somnour**, and the **Maunciple** may not have been in his original plan, but that Chaucer himself was, from the first, one of the pilgrims seems clear from I, 17ff.

545ff. For a good account of the social and economic status of the **Miller** see Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, p. 65. As the miller had a monopoly of grinding the grain of the tenants of a manor, and as his occupation admitted of much trickery and dishonesty, enmity between millers and reeves was not uncommon. Chaucer perhaps intends to indicate this by making the Reeve lag sullenly at the rear of the procession, as far as possible from the Miller, who, because he played the bagpipe, rode at the head.

The portrait of the Miller is full of individual traits, and his quarrel with the Reeve serves to link him with the Reeve as drawn from a living model (cf. note on I, 587ff.).

548. The best picture of the popular sport of wrestling — for which a ram was a common prize — is given in *The Tale of Gamelyn*, which, although commonly believed not to be by Chaucer, occurs in a large number of the manuscripts of *CT* (see above, p. 81).

560. **goliardeys.** At some uncertain date, but long before Chaucer's day, vagabond clerics who wrote satires on the church and a considerable amount of Latin verse decidedly worldly in substance and tone were commonly called 'Familia Goliae,' or 'Goliardi,' or 'Goliardenses.' By Chaucer's time the term 'Goliardeys' was used loosely for any teller of disreputable stories or

singer of disreputable songs. On the origin of the term see "Familia Goliae," *MPh*, V, 201–09 and, for a different theory, Thompson, *Stud Phil*, xx, 83–98.

563. The old proverb "An honest miller has a golden thumb" is parallel to the other proverb "A perfectly honest man has hair growing in the palm of his hand." The suggestion that Chaucer also has in mind the value of the Miller's thumb in testing the quality of flour is possible but not very probable.

567ff. A **maunciple** was a subordinate official of a college or other similar organization; in the Inner Temple he ranked below the cook. Although Chaucer devotes twenty lines to him here, he merely emphasizes his dishonesty and cunning and makes no effort to give any definite impression of him. As the same traits are brought out in the little scene preceding his tale (IX 1–104), it would seem that Chaucer was merely hitting at the cunning of manciples in general and perhaps at the same time chaffing the learned masters of law who allowed themselves to be cheated by such servants.

The societies of the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple got their names from the buildings which they occupy. These buildings were originally the property of the great and wealthy order of Knights Templars, but after the suppression of the order and confiscation of its property, they were granted to the order of Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The Knights of St. John then sublet the premises to lawyers for a school. Formerly it was supposed that in Chaucer's day there was only one society of lawyers occupying the Temple buildings; and consequently some scholars doubted whether in l. 567 the correct reading was **a Temple** or **the Temple.** Recent research confirms the MS reading **a.** It appears that certain *apprenticii*, drawn mainly from St. George's Inn, one of the already existing law schools, first settled in some of the Temple buildings between 1322 and 1326. Later, another group, from Clifford's Inn, obtained a demise of the remaining parts and took possession of them. The first group became known as the Society of the Middle Temple; the other as the Society of the Inner Temple. See *Master Worsley's Book* (ed. A. R. Ingpen), Introduction.

The education in the inns of court was very broad, including instruction not only in law but also in Latin, French, history, music, and other subjects supposed to be of value professionally or socially. Many of the members of the Temple devoted themselves, not to practice at the bar, but to the management of large estates and other professional business. The training given was the best preparation for a business career then offered in England (cf. ll. 576–83).

570. **by taille,** by tally. A tally (from **tailler,** to cut) was a strip of wood notched to indicate the amount of a debt. It was then split, each party retaining one half. At a date set for payment, the creditor presented his half as evidence of the amount owed. For full information about tallies cf. the learned and interesting article of Jenkinson, in *Arch*, LXXIV, 289–351.

579. Cf. Davenport, *Norfolk Manor*, p. 22:

"It was usually the business of holding court that brought him [the steward] to the manor. His special province was to protect the legal

rights of the lord, and he had also to acquaint himself with the economic administration of the estate."

He acted as a check upon the bailiffs and other officers. It may be worth noting that these men obtained a legal training, not in order to practice law, but to fit them for business management. Chaucer's object in obtaining a legal training seems to have been similar.

586. **sette hir aller cappe,** slang for 'got the better of them.'

587ff. Two of the most definitely detailed portraits of the Prologue are those of the **Reve** and the **Millere,** whose ancient enmity breaks out on the very first morning as soon as the Knight has finished his tale, and motivates with entire naturalness the departure from the conventional order in calling upon the story-tellers. The Reeve is unmistakably individual. Not only are his personal appearance and his equipment described in detail, but he is definitely allocated to an insignificant village in a distant part of Norfolk. The situation of his dwelling is described, and he is specifically said to have had charge of the affairs of the manor since his lord was twenty years of age. What interest, one may ask, could Chaucer have had in a distant village like **Baldeswelle,** and what could the mention of it have meant to the circle of friends and acquaintances for whom *CT* were written? These questions are not as difficult as might be supposed. Baldeswelle and the adjoining manor of Foxley were parts of the Norfolk estates of the earls of Pembroke. The second earl went abroad in the retinue of the Prince of Wales before April 4, 1369, only a few months after he had come of age, and with the exception of brief visits to England remained in foreign service until his death in 1375. At his death all his landed estates held by direct tenure from the king reverted to the king and remained in his hands during the minority of the heir. In 1378 the king granted the care and management of some of them to Sir William Beauchamp, whose two mainpernors or sureties were "John Beverle and Geoffrey Chaucer of London." The estates had long been mismanaged, and continued to be so while in the hands of Sir William de Beauchamp. He therefore after considerable discussion turned them over in 1386 to the Countess of Norfolk, the grandmother of the young Pembroke heir.

That Baldeswelle and Foxley were not among the lands concerning the management of which Chaucer had assumed definite financial obligations as mainpernor, strengthens the case. Beauchamp, who had once hoped for the possession of all the lands, and who must have regarded the Countess of Norfolk as in some sense a rival, could hardly have failed, when his own management of the part he had was questioned, to enjoy a satire on one of her rascally officers. Undoubtedly the prominence of the principals — Sir William de Beauchamp, the young Earl of Hastings, and the great Countess of Norfolk — was such that the whole affair must have been a subject of common talk both in the small circle of the court and among substantial men in the city.

Originally the **reeve** of a manor was one of the serfs attached to the estate, elected annually to represent the interests of the serfs against the bailiff, who originally represented the interests of the lord of the manor. In the course

of time, however, the reeve came to be more and more trusted by the lord, and in many cases seems to have taken over the functions of the bailiff as well as those originally belonging to the reeve (cf. Davenport, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 and 50). In some instances his appointment was not annual but for an indefinite term. He kept account of all receipts and expenditures, whether of money, grain, or stock, and was obliged to submit to the auditors of his lord evidence of the correctness of these accounts in the shape of written bills, or, more frequently, tallies.

The **bailiff** was appointed by the lord, as has been said, and sometimes resided on the manor to look after the interests of the lord, to see that the demesne was properly tilled, the grain garnered, stock cared for, and the produce sold in the best market. He was paid yearly wages (in the fourteenth century about 100 *s.*) and also had his dwelling and an allowance for his horse (*ibid.* p. 22). Sometimes he had charge of more than one manor.

The **steward** (cf. l. 579ff.) was the general representative of a landowner who possessed a number of manors. He passed from one manor to another as supervisor of all the manor officials. His authority was only less than that of the lord of the manor himself.

"As the steward acted as a check upon the bailiff and other officers, so did the accountants (or **auditors**) upon the officers of the manor, including the steward himself. Before threshing time they sometimes came to the manor to examine into the condition of the estate and to estimate the quantity of grain . . . one of their chief duties was to collect money that was due" (*ibid.* p. 23).

604. **covyne,** any sort of agreement to defraud. *Letter Book G* (p. 295) records that the dyers, by covine among themselves, now receive 12 *d.* or 14 *d.* for a pound of Brazil dye instead of 7½ *d.* as formerly.

616. **Scot** seems to have been a common name for a workhorse; it occurs twice in John de Berington's inventory (1389), Oxf. Hist. Soc., *Misc.* III, 60, n. 12; cf. *CT*, III, 1543.

620. **Baldeswelle,** the modern Bawdswell, a village in the northern part of Norfolk not far from Reepham; cf. note on ll. 587ff.

623ff. A **Somonour** was an apparitor or constable attached to an ecclesiastical court. In the fourteenth century minor officials of both the ecclesiastical and the secular courts preyed unmercifully upon the poor and ignorant. They accepted bribes for bringing false charges against innocent persons, and also brought false charges on their own account for the purpose of securing bribes to let the charges drop. The best comment on this sketch of the Summonour is *FrT*. Cf. Lanfranc (pp. 191, 193, 203) and *Letter Book H*, pp. 328, 330.

624ff. The full repulsiveness of the Summoner's face does not appear at first. It is only after ll. 627 and 632f. that one fully understands l. 628. The flaming red face, spotted with white-headed pustules, the scraggly beard and scabby eyebrows, the eyelids swollen so as to leave only a narrow slit for seeing, and probably deprived of lashes and turned partly wrong-side out, are manifest symptoms of *alopicia*, a form of leprosy. As the treatments suggested in ll. 629–32 are the usual mediaeval prescriptions for this disease,

there can be no doubt of Chaucer's intention. For a full discussion of the whole subject, see Curry, ch. ii.

627. **piled berd.** Lanfranc, p. 180, says: "Allopix in grew [i.e., Greek] is seid fox in latin; for a fox in sum tyme of the yeer his heer pilith awei, and therfore fallyng awei of heer is clepid allopucia"; cf. also "piled awey," *ibid.* p. 184.

635ff. Chaucer was not the only person in the Middle Ages to note the tendency of strong drink to promote the gift of tongues. Wander, *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexicon*, quotes a proverb:

> Post sumere vinum loquitur mea lingua Latinum:
> Et bibo cum bis ter, sum qualibet arte magister.
> (After I drink wine my tongue speaks Latin,
> And after six drinks I am master of every art.)

Gower writes (*Miroir de l'Omme*, 8149ff.):

> Yveresce fait diverse chance:
> Latin fait parler et romance
> Au laie ġent et au clergoun
> Tolt de Latin la remembrance.

Compare also *Beunans Meriasek* (ed. Stokes, 1872), ll. 80f.

644. **grope** is commonly used as a technical term for close questioning. Cf. III, 1816f.:

> Thise curatz been ful necligent and slowe
> To grope tendrely a conscience.

646. **questio quid juris.** In his exaltation, the Summoner imagines himself conducting a case in the court and using phrases he has heard from the lawyers.

649ff. **good felawe** was slang for 'a disreputable fellow,' 'a rascal'; cf. "I never besorted or played the good fellow, as sometimes ye know flesh and blood will be frayle, but my wife hath knowen on it ere I came home (*John A. Kent*, p. 41). The reference is probably to those priests who, contrary to the law of the Church, lived with women. Such women were commonly called *concubines*. In 1372 the Commons petitioned the king to deprive any priest who lived with a concubine, if after six months the ordinary had failed to do so (*Rot. Parl.*, ii, 314). But the offences of laymen against morals were also under the jurisdiction of the archdeacon.

To "pull a finch" has usually been explained as slang for 'cheat a victim,' but in *MPh*, VII, 476f., Kittredge quotes four French songs to show that *plumer* has an obscene sense. For uses of the corresponding English term "pulle" he refers to "Piers of Fulham" and "The Baffled Knight."

655. The archdeacon was normally the executive officer of a district of the diocese and the head of the ecclesiastical court. Sentences of excommunication ('cursing') were therefore under his control.

662. After a sentence of excommunication had been passed by the Church, a writ for seizing the excommunicated person was issued by the civil authorities

at the request of the bishop. This writ, technically called 'De excommunicato capiendo,' began with the words "Significavit nobis venerabilis pater," and was popularly called a 'Significavit.'

663. **daunger** still retained its original meaning of 'power, control.' Hinckley rightly says it is best rendered by 'under his thumb, at his mercy.'

664. **girles.** 'young people,' without regard to sex. Skeat points out that **knave gerlys,** meaning 'boys', occurs in the Coventry Mysteries; cf. also, "Grammer for gerles I garte first wryte" (*PP*, B, x, 175).

665. Note that **conseil** means 'secrets'; cf. VI, 819.

666ff. The Summoner, having perhaps already imbibed too freely, was arrayed very festivously. The usual sign for a mediaeval drinking place was a bush of ivy or a garland of leaves and flowers wreathed on a hoop and suspended from a pole, called an alestake, which projected horizontally above the door of the alehouse; cf. VI, 321f. Competition led to the use of alestakes so large and long as to become dangerous. In the city of London ordinances were passed that no alestake should extend more than seven feet over the roadway. Cf. *Liber Albus*, trans. Riley, pp. 389, 992.

669ff. **The Pardoner.** On the general subject cf. Jusserand, "Chaucer's Pardoner and the Pope's Pardoners" in *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Soc.), pp. 421–436, or his *Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 309–337.

Indulgences were originally commutations of penances imposed for sins. The pope, archbishops, and bishops were believed to have the power of permitting good works, or payments for the support of good works, to be substituted for the usual penances for sins. Later — under the theory (elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas) of a treasury of merits accumulated by Christ and the saints, participation in which could be granted by the proper ecclesiastical authorities — money payments for indulgences became more and more common. Abuses arose in two ways: first, by the forgery of papal credentials and bulls of indulgence, commonly called pardons; second, by the corrupt practices even of quaestors or pardoners properly authorized by the pope and handling genuine bulls.

The bulls of indulgence were written on strips of parchment with the leaden seals of the papal office attached. These bulls were purchased wholesale at a price which seems not to have exceeded a penny apiece, and then disposed of for all that the traffic would bear. Technically the profits made by duly authorized quaestors or pardoners went to some religious organization and were devoted to some pious work, such as the support of the brethren or sisters, or the building or repair of their houses. In practice, however, much of the profits stuck to the fingers of the pardoners themselves. According to ecclesiastical law, pardoners were not allowed to operate in a diocese without the permission of the bishop, but according to *PP* not only the bishop but even the parish priest sometimes shared the ill-gotten gains of the pardoner. Cf. *PP*, Prol., ll. 64–79.

Notices of pardoners are common in all parts of England in the fourteenth century, and they continued their activities even to the time of the Resto-

ration. A satirical poem printed by Wright, *Political Poems*, II, 79, names those of St. Thomas of Acres, of Antoun, and of **Rouncival.** The B text of *PP*, II, 108, mentions "Pieres the Pardonere of Paulynes doctrine." R. H. Morris, *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 573, quotes from the Churchwardens Accounts of St. Mary on the Hill (Chester) in 1536–37, entries of payments for the privilege of selling indulgences: "Received of two pardoners viii *d.*, of a pardoner of St. Chad ii *d.*, of a pardoner of Our Lady Rounseval iv *d.*" The best study of the pardoners of Rouncival is that in *The Story of St. Mary Roncevale*, by James Galloway, 1907; see also Westlake, *Parish Gilds*, especially pp. 77–96. The Rouncival referred to was at Charing Cross, then a village just outside London. It was a cell or subordinate house of Our Lady of Roncevaux in Navarre. Toward the end of the fourteenth century, the house passed into the possession of a fraternity and ceased to have any relations with the mother house except the payment of a small annual rent. Whether this change occurred before or after the operations of Chaucer's Pardoner does not clearly appear; but Galloway prints records which charge that certain persons had collected money for the hospital and retained it for their own use. It has been pointed out that pardoners were especially abundant after the jubilee year 1390 (Lea, *History of Auricular Confessions and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, III, 66), but long before that date their activities had aroused the severest condemnation, not only of satirists and of the general public, but of bishops and popes, as is abundantly proved by the quotations in Jusserand.

There were other houses called "Rouncival" in England. Prof. T. A. Jenkins refers me to the Cartulary of the Monastery of St. Frideswide (Oxford Hist. Soc.), I, 399, for mention of a "domo . . . vocata . . . Runcivall." The charter describes it as "in Oxeneford in vico S. Johanni." But this has nothing to do with our Pardoner.

671. **the court of Rome.** From 1378 to 1417 Christendom was divided by the Great Schism. There was a pope in Rome, who was recognized by England, Bohemia, Hungary, and the greater part of the Empire, and a rival one in Avignon, who was recognized by France, Spain, Scotland, Sicily, and Cyprus. The causes of the division were not religious but political, and the strife between the two popes led to many deplorable conflicts, which threatened to discredit the church in the eyes of all sincere believers. As England acknowledged the pope of Rome, it was natural that the Pardoner operating in England should come, not from Avignon, but from Rome.

672. **Com hider, love, to me:** apparently the first line or the refrain of a popular song. Professor Skeat thinks it is the same as that referred to in *Pearl*, l. 763, but the quotation there is "*Come hyder to me, my lemman swete*," which, although it is the same in sentiment, is obviously different in form and rhythm.

Note the rhyme of **Rome** with **to me** (cf. note on I, 17–8).

675ff. From the abundance of the Pardoner's hair some scholars have inferred that he was a layman who had not received the tonsure. This is entirely

possible, and the fact — which we learn later — that he was accustomed to preach does not interfere with this supposition, for laymen were sometimes appointed as quaestors or pardoners and licensed to preach. On the other hand, since the tonsure consisted only in shaving a small space at the crown of the hair, and since tonsured persons were often censured for letting their hair grow long, it is quite possible that Chaucer's Pardoner was in minor orders; cf. note on III, 163ff.

682. **the newe jet,** the new style, or fashion — which perhaps he was bringing from Italy; cf. "But now a dayes and a woman here of a newe gette, she will never be in pees till she have the same" (*La Tour*, p. 31).

685. **vernycle,** a small copy of the handkerchief of St. Veronica preserved at Rome. According to the legend, when Christ was compelled to bear the cross on the road to Calvary, a woman named Veronica lent him a handkerchief to wipe his face. When he returned it to her, it was found to have his picture imprinted upon it. Copies of this portrait, called 'veronicae,' or 'veroniculae' — in English, 'vernicles' — were often brought home by pilgrims to Rome. In the picture of the Pardoner in the Ellesmere MS the portrait of the vernicle can be plainly seen.

692. **Berwyk unto Ware:** commonly taken to mean from one end of England to the other, but I know of no other early instance of the expression. The district between Berwick-on-Tweed in the extreme north and Ware (in Hertfordshire) would not include London; that between Barwick in Somerset and Ware might be regarded as doing so, but this Barwick seems to have been little known, whereas Berwick-on-Tweed was famous.

694. The development of modern *mail*, letters and packages carried in a **male,** or bag, furnishes an interesting study in semantics. **pilwebeer** was in common use in the eighteenth century. It occurs a number of times in *Humphrey Clinker*.

696ff. The reference is apparently to the time when St. Peter attempted to walk on the Sea of Galilee and lost his courage and faith.

702. **relikes.** With the list of relics given here compare that given by the Pardoner himself in V, 347–76. Mock lists of relics were not uncommon; cf. those in the *Decamerone*, and Heywood's *Foure PP;* cf. also Petit de Julleville, *Repertoire du Théâtre Comique*, p. 189.

706. **made . . . his apes:** slang, 'made fools of them.'

709f. A **lesson,** or lection, was a passage from the Bible or from a Church Father read in the services of the Hours. **Storie,** or *historia*, has several liturgical meanings; see Karl Young, *MLN*, XXX, 976; and in *Manly Anniversary Studies*, especially pp. 257–58. The meaning intended here is doubtless the series of **lectiones** covering a story in the Bible or the life of a saint. The **offertorie** is the portion of the service of the mass sung while the faithful present their offerings. But it is a mistake to suppose that the offertory was for the benefit of the Pardoner; it was the regular offering for the church.

719. Chaucer seems to indicate very precisely the location of the Tabard, but I can find no other early reference to the Bell inn. Baum's article, *MLN*, XXXVI, 307–09, though inconclusive, should be consulted. Whether there was another Tabard in Southwark I do not know. There were inns of that name in London; cf. "the tenement which Robert Lyndesone has in Wodestrete at the Tabard in the parish of St. Albans" (Plea and Mem. Rolls, A 30 m. 5d.), and there were at least two more: On 2 June, 7 Richard II, the Mayor and aldermen of London required innholders to give surety for good behavior; in the list for Breadstreet ward was 'John Hostiller at the Tabard'; in that for Faringdon-Without was 'John Lenham atte Tabard' (*ib.*, A 27 m. 11).

723. **viage,** 'voyage'; in early English the word did not imply travel by water.

741. Chaucer himself could not read Plato in Greek. He took his quotation either from Boethius, *De Cons. Phil.* iii, pr. 12 — which he translates "Thou hast lerned by the sentence of Plato that nedes the wordes moten be cosines to the thinges of which they speken" — or from *RR*, 15820–22:

> Li dis doit le fait resembler;
> Car les voiz as choses voisines
> Doivent estre a lor faiz cousines.

Few scholars in western Europe in the fourteenth century could read Greek, but there were translations into Latin of many of Aristotle's works and of parts of three of Plato's *Dialogues*. Such writers as Bradwardine (see note on VII, 4432) quote freely from Plato, but their knowledge is largely derived from the works of St. Augustine and other early church fathers.

747ff. These lines apparently indicate that the pilgrims ate at the table of the Host. If so, it would seem that the London tradesmen were not served by the Cook during the journey; see note on l. 379f.

751ff. We learn from I, 4358 that the Host's name was Harry Bailly. For evidence that this was actually the name of the host of the Tabard at the time when the *CT* were written, see note on I, 4358.

752. The duties of a **marshal** called for dignity, a knowledge of precedence, and tact; cf. *Two Fifteenth Century Books of Courtesy* (EETS), p. 15.

760. The Host, though genial, was taking no chances on the pilgrims.

771ff. Apparently the telling of tales on the road to Canterbury was a common practice. For other forms of entertainment, see the following pasage from *The Examination of William Thorpe*, in 1407:

> "They will ordain with them before to have with them both men and women that can well sing wanton songs; and some other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes: so that every town that they come through, what with the noise of their singing, and with the sound of their piping, and with the jangling of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise than if the King came there away, with all his clarions and many other minstrels. And if these

Baker, A note on Chis KT. MLN 45 ('30) 460

[illegible] in " 46 ('31) 302

men and women be a month out in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be, a half year after, great janglers, tale-tellers, and liars." — Pollard, *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, pp. 140–141.

791. **oure.** The Host has not yet proposed that he should join the pilgrims, but for all that Chaucer may have purposely written **oure** here and in I, 799 instead of the **youre** found in some MSS.

793. Hinckley thinks that **to Caunterbury ward** should be construed with **viage** of I, 792; but cf. VII, 1734.

798. **sentence.** Latin 'sententia' regularly means 'valuable morality.'

799. **oure aller:** a relic of the old genitive plural from **ure ealra**; cf. I, 823.

803. El has **self**; but Chaucer probably wrote **selfe** or **selven.**

810. Professor Skeat says 'we swore our oaths,' but it is rather 'our oaths were sworn.' But *we* is supplied as subject of **preyden** in the next line.

814. **reportour:** not to record the tales, but to report on their merits.

826. The old maps of the Canterbury road show St. Thomas Watering about a mile and a half from the Tabard Inn.

829. After **and,** most editors insert **I,** which is found in several manuscripts. El and Ha^4 omit it. Dd has **if ye it record.** The line with I is not metrically objectionable, but it seems possible that Chaucer may here be using **yow recorde** as a reflexive verb group of which **ye** is the subject. The French **se recorder** regularly means 'to recall, to remember.'

835. **cut** in the sense of 'lot' is probably not connected with the English verb **cut,** but is derived, as Hinckley has suggested, from Welsh **cwt** ('a lot'). A fourteenth century glossary printed in Wright's *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 6–9, has 'sors, a kaut or a lotte'; cf. "Thei saide they wolde drawe cutte" (*La Tour*, p. 34).

839. **neer:** not 'near,' but 'nearer.'

THE KNYGHTES TALE (859–3108)

In *LGW* (F), 420f. Queen Alceste names among the poems she cites in Chaucer's defence:

> And al the love of Palamoun and Arcite
> Of Thebes, thogh the storye ys knowen lyte.

The source of Chaucer's story of Palamon and Arcite is undoubtedly Boccaccio's *Teseide*, a long courtly epic in twelve books. The fact that certain stanzas of the epic, closely translated from the original, were used by Chaucer in three of his poems (*PF*, 16 stanzas; *AA*, 10 stanzas; and *TC*, 3 stanzas) all of which are in seven-line stanzas, led scholars for a time to believe that Chaucer had made a complete translation of Boccaccio's epic in the seven-line stanza and that when he came to compose the *CT* he rewrote this extensive translation, condensing it into the comparatively brief form now known as *KT*. This view, however, has been generally abandoned, and scholars commonly

believe that Chaucer's original version was essentially the same as *KT* as we now have it. It is clear, of course, that the text must have undergone some revision, cf. ll. 885–92.

Professor Root (*The Poetry of Chaucer*, p. 295) now believes that the composition of *KT* falls two or three years later than that of *PF*. This may be true, but his argument in support of it, p. 168, rests upon a mistaken interpretation of the second line quoted above. He says, "In the Prologue to *LGW* it is clearly implied that *TC* is widely known . . .; whereas it is explicitly stated that the story of Palamon and Arcite is 'knowen lyte' . . . This suggests that it had only recently been finished or at any rate that its circulation had not been wide. If composed as an independent poem earlier than *TC* it is hard to see why the work should be 'little known.'"

But Chaucer does not say that his poem was little known. He merely speaks of the story as little known, and in doing so he translates accurately the words with which Boccaccio characterizes it in the letter to his mistress Fiammetta, prefixed to the *Tes:* "Una antichissima storia, e al piu delle genti non manifesta"; in *Tes* itself (bk. I, st. 2) Boccaccio repeats the characterization: "There has come to me the desire to write in piteous rhyme an ancient story so hidden and secreted among the years that so far as I know no Latin author tells anything about it in any book":

E' m' e venuta voglia con pietosa
  Rima di scriver una storia antica,
Tanto negli anni riposta e nascosa,
  Che latino autor non par ne dica,
Per quel ch' i' senta, in libro alcuna cosa.

Although the exact date of the original composition of *KT* is uncertain, there can be little doubt that it was originally composed as an independent work and not for use as a Canterbury tale. This is indicated, not merely by the reference to it in *LGW*, but also by the fact that it is much longer than any of the other tales in verse. Several passages in the poem also support this view; cf. ll. 1201, 1347–48, 1459–60. It is, however, appropriately enough assigned to the Knight, and worthily introduces the series of tales.

Boccaccio's *Teseide* is a fine example of the courtly epic. It is full of brilliant and elaborate descriptions of sieges, and battles, and social functions, and of long and eloquent speeches. Partly by eliminating these features, and partly by confining his narrative strictly to the love story of Palamon and Arcite, Chaucer has reduced the length of the poem to about one-fifth of the original, has simplified its structure, and given it the qualities of a metrical romance instead of those of a courtly epic. The interest of Boccaccio's poem lay chiefly in its rich elaboration; that of Chaucer's lies chiefly in dramatic situation. The characters are, with the exception of Theseus, drawn in simple outline. This is doubtless due, not to any lack of development of Chaucer's power of characterization, but to the requirements of the story itself. Emelye has necessarily no individuality, not so much because of her youth, but because she is merely the prize for which the two noble kinsmen contend. They in their turn are necessarily so much alike that the reader is as little able to choose

between them as was Emelye herself. In brief, the story in Chaucer's hands becomes primarily a presentation of the conflict between love and the closest conceivable bonds of friendship, in which, although love is for a time triumphant, the claims of friendship are finally reasserted in the end. Curry (ch. VI) credits Chaucer with motivating the incidents of the story by the quarrel between Mars and Venus and the intervention of Saturn, but this is already in Boccaccio. What Chaucer did — and it was perhaps artistically important — was to identify gods and planets and so bring them nearer to human appeal.

The Latin quotation at the beginning of the tale is from the *Thebaid* of Statius. Chaucer was familiar with this poem, but he makes little use of it. It is not clear why the lines are recorded in the MSS.

859–83. In these twenty-five lines Chaucer summarizes the first book and part of the second of Boccaccio's epic. The remainder of the second book furnishes the basis of ll. 983–1027.

877. **the regne of Femenye.** Gower as well as Chaucer uses a word derived from Latin **femina,** 'a woman,' to designate the country called by ancient writers Amazonia. According to mediaeval belief, it lay partly in Asia and partly in Europe. The classic account of the Amazons (a kingdom of women who permitted no man to reside in their country) was derived principally from Herodotus, but there are references to the legend in various ancient writings, including even the *Iliad*.

879. **for the nones.** An intensifying adverbial phrase modifying **great,** cf. note on I, 379.

884. **the tempest at hir hoom comynge.** As Boccaccio tells of no tempest at the home-coming of Theseus and Hippolyta, and as one of the Latin chronicles (Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, II, 46) contains an account of a "commotion of the sea immediately after the arrival of Anne of Bohemia in England which caused the destruction of the vessel in which she had come," Lowes (*MLN*, XIX, 240–43) argues that Chaucer has here introduced an allusion to that event, and therefore that these lines were written shortly after her arrival in England (December 18, 1381). This widely accepted view has recently been combated on the ground that **tempest** may mean nothing more than the popular excitement which such an event as the return of the conqueror Theseus with his bride Hippolyta would naturally produce; see Curry, *MLN*, XXXVI, 272–74.

893. **duc.** In designating Theseus as a duke it is possible that Chaucer was influenced by the fact that there was in his day a duke of Athens (cf. Liebermann, *Archiv*, CXLV, 101–02 and W. Miller, *The Latin Orient*, pp. 27–31). But like all mediaeval writers he conceived of the organization of society in ancient times as being the same as that with which he was familiar; cf. I, 2125. He was therefore conscious of no anachronism in using mediaeval titles for heroes of antiquity or in ascribing to ancient times the customs, dress, and arms of his own.

908. **that,** not 'who,' but 'that ye.'

913. That the lady should indulge in a swoon before speaking is a romance convention. Hinckley suggests that Chaucer mistook **Evanes,** the Italian form of the name Evadne, wife of Capaneus, for the preterit of a verb meaning 'to swoon.' If so — which seems doubtful — this would be an indication that at this time Chaucer's knowledge of Italian was not impeccable.

925. The conception of the fates of men as controlled by Fortune and her false wheel was a commonplace of mediaeval literature and art. It may have come to Chaucer from any one of numberless sources. Undoubtedly familiar to him were the passages in *RR* (cf. the 14th c. translation, ll. 4353–64) and in Boethius (Chaucer's tr., ii, pr. 2). Many mediaeval manuscripts contain pictures of Fortune turning a wheel, to the rim of which are bound representatives of different states and occupations. In the choir of Rochester cathedral there is a 13th c. wall painting of this subject, which Chaucer had probably seen. The most accessible picture to the student, however, is a woodcut of the early sixteenth century reproduced as frontispiece to Lydgate's *Fall of Princes,* pt. I (EETS). This was originally prefixed to a German translation of Boccaccio, *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium,* a work devoted entirely to this theme.

938. El has **now** after **yet;** probably caught up from the next line.

968. **go ne ride.** When contrasted with **ride, go** means 'walk,' as in the Shakespearean jingle, "ride more than thou goest" (*Lear,* I, iv, 134).

975. **statue,** that is 'picture,' probably embroidered in the banner; **red,** because the planet Mars is red, and red is the appropriate color for the god.

977. Hinckley produces six quotations from mediaeval literature to show that it was a commonplace to speak of the fields through which an army passed as glittering with the splendor of the banners. He might have produced many more. Decisive passages are quoted by Kittredge, *MLN,* XXV, 28. As Chaucer is commonly supposed to have been working on *AA* at about the same time as on this poem, it is interesting to note that he there says of Emelye (ll. 4of.):

> That al the ground aboute her char she spradde
> With brightnesse of the beautee in her face.

979. **ybete.** Thin sheets of beaten gold were often used for decorative purposes, but many passages occur in which '**beaten**' must mean 'embroidered.' Miss Rickert reminds me that the livery rolls record many payments for embroidering (*vapulandum*), and suggests that it is the same thing as "whipping" meaning to 'overlay with thread or cord.' *Bete* and *whip* are synonyms of different dates. *OED* gives: "Frettes of whipped gold of damaske very rich (Hall, *Chron.*); and "ouer-whipt with gold twist" (R. Greene). Hinckley cites, among other similar passages, *Kinge Alisaunder,* 1034: "Hire herneys gold, beten with selk"; cf. also Emerson, *PhQ,* II, 85.

1011. **by and by:** 'side by side.'

1012. **Bothe in oon armes:** As they belonged to the same family, they had the same coat of arms (cf. **cote-armures,** l. 1016) — another illustration of the

fact that Chaucer conceived ancient customs and manners to be the same as those of his own day.

1013f. Chaucer took the names **Arcita** and **Palamon** from Boccaccio. Hinckley's idea that Boccaccio derived the former from the Archytas of Cicero's *De Senectute* and the latter from *Polemon*, the name of a Greek philosopher, seems improbable, as also does the suggestion of Hales that *Palemon* was coined from the Greek to mean a wrestler or suitor; Hinckley himself admits that *Palaemon* was the name of a Theban in Statius and in the *Roman de Thebes*.

1024. Holding prisoners for ransom was a common custom in the Middle Ages. Chaucer himself was so held in 1359. The profit derived from ransoms became one of the principal inducements for knights to go to war.

1047. **doon honour to May.** The observance of May was common to all classes in the olden time. Skeat quotes appropriately a passage from Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses* (ed. Furnivall, p. 149): "Against Maie, every parishe, towne, and village, assembled themselves together, bothe men, women, and children, olde and yonge, even all indifferently, and either going all together or devidyng themselves into companies, they goe, some to the woodes and groves, some to the hills and mountaines, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pastimes; in the morninge they return, bringing with them birche bowes and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withalle." Similar passages occur in many authors; cf. also I, 1491–1512.

1049. The heroines of the Middle Ages are usually represented with golden hair and blue eyes. Unmarried girls wore their hair in a braid.

1051. **the sonne upriste,** 'the sun's uprising.' The OE genitive was **sunnan,** which regularly gave **sunne** (or *sonne*) in ME.

1087f. An **aspect** of the heavenly bodies is the way in which from their relative positions they look upon each other. The aspects are properly three: trine, quartile, and sextile, or respectively $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{1}{6}$ of 360 degrees. Some authors count conjunction and opposition also as aspects.

Saturn is so malignant a planet that his influence is always "wikke." Curry (p. 120) seems to suggest that the malignant influence of Saturn upon the fortunes of Arcite had already begun, and speaks of Saturn as Arcite's planetary enemy. Saturn seems, however, to have acted from no personal enmity, but only to please Venus (cf. I, 2438–78) and to have taken no special interest in the heroes earlier. But Chaucer undoubtedly inserts the early references to the planets to prepare the reader for their later influence.

1089. **although we hadde it sworn** — an idiom, meaning 'although we had sworn that it should not.'

1101. **wher,** 'whether.'

1122. **I nam but deed,** 'I shall surely die,' an idiom.

1132. Brotherhood by oath was in the Middle Ages regarded as even more sacred than brotherhood by birth; compare the story of *Amis and Amiloun*

or *The Romance of Athelston*. It is still so regarded in the East. Kipling's well-known "Ballad of East and West" develops this theme finely.

The syntax of this line is somewhat doubtful. Liddell thinks that **and** introduces the phrase **Ysworn ful depe.** It is true that Gower has many passages in which **and** follows, instead of preceding, the words it introduces, but the occurrence of this idiom in Chaucer is doubtful, and the position of the caesural mark after **depe** is against its occurrence here. Most editors regard **and ech of us til oother** as merely emphasizing by repetition the preceding clause.

1133. **in the peyne:** some form of torture, such as pressing to death or hanging up by the thumbs. Hinckley (p. 64f.) discusses it fully and refers to Blackstone, bk. 4, ch. 25 and to his own notes on I, 1451 and 1746.

1147. **conseil,** probably 'confidant.' Liddell says *OED* records no other use of the word in this sense before 1647. But it occurs in the sense of 'secret' in l. 665.

1150. **lay:** 'should lie' (Hinckley).

1155. 'To love **paramour**' is 'to be in love with,' as distinguished from the love one may feel for one's relatives or the worship of a higher being; cf. Macaulay, *MLR*, IV, 16. Hinckley's idea that **paramour** is here a mild oath is hardly acceptable.

1163ff. The **olde clerk** is Boethius; cf. iii, m. 12, a passage which Chaucer translates thus: "What is he that may yive a lawe to loveres? Love is a gretter lawe and a strenger to himself than any lawe that men may yeven."

1167. **positif law** ('lex positiva') is a technical term opposed to 'natural law.' It is that which depends upon man's decree; cf. Macaulay *MLR*, IV, 17, who gives several examples from Gower to illustrate the term. Gower discusses it thoroughly in connection with the story of Canace.

1198ff. This story comes from *RR* (ed. Michel, 8898–8904; Ellis's translation, 8555–59).

1201. **to write.** This is usually regarded as evidence that the story was not originally meant to be told. This is possible, but it is equally possible that Chaucer merely forgot that he was writing it for one of the pilgrims; in III, 224f. the Wife of Bath speaks as if other women than the two nuns were in her audience.

1209. **pleynly.** Liddell translates this 'fully,' but it probably means 'clearly,' 'definitely.'

1212. **o stounde.** El has **or** — probably because of the preceding **or.**

1246. The four elements, of which all things were supposed to be made.

1251ff. The sentiment comes from Boethius, iii, pr. 2.

1255–57. **Som man . . . som man,** 'one man . . . another.'

1261. Proverbial; cf. III, 426, and Boethius, iii, pr. 2, 642.

1262ff. Chaucer found this in the manuscript of Boethius which he translated (iii, pr. 2). It is really a gloss commonly ascribed to St. Thomas Aquinas.

1279. Hinckley notes that **grete** goes with **fettres.**

1303–12. Liddell calls attention to a similar apostrophe in Boethius, i, m. 5.

1306. **parlement,** not a 'meeting,' but 'a decree'; cf. Hinckley.

1315–21. The idea that the brutes are happier than men is a commonplace of both ancient and modern times. Hinckley quotes *Dialogus inter Corpus et Animam*, ll. 227–30 (*Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, p. 103):

> O felix conditio pecorum brutorum.
> cadunt cum corporibus spiritus eorum,
> nec post mortem subeunt locum tormentorum.
> Talis esset utinam finis impiorum!

1328. The mention of Juno shows that Palamon is thinking rather of the heathen gods than of the planets as astrological influences.

1344. **upon his heed,** 'on pain of losing his head.'

1347–52. Questions of this sort were a common amusement of the courts of love. Cf. Manly, "What is the Parlement of Foules?", (*Morsbach Jubilee Volume*) and V, 1621–24.

1356–79. The symptoms and actions here ascribed to Arcite are those belonging to **the loveris maladye of hereos** and **manie** (ll. 1373f.). There is a similar passage in *Tes*, iv, st. 26–29, but Chaucer has undoubtedly made use of what the great medical authorities say concerning 'amor hereos': Signa autem sunt quando amittunt somnum, cibum, potum [Bernard], cf. l. 1361; Et maceratur totum corpus [Bernard]; et eorum corpora dessicantur [Razis]; et sunt omnia membra eius arefacta [Avycen], cf. l. 1362; Et oculi sicci et concavi [Razis], cf. l. 1363; Et eorum facies sunt croceae propter vigilias [Razis]; citrui sunt ipsorum colores [Constantyn], cf. l. 1364; Pacientes . . . ereos incedunt stridendo . . . et clamando tota nocte [Razis], cf. l. 1366; Alteratur dispositio eius . . . ad tristitiam et fletum, cum amoris cantilenas audit [Avycen], cf. ll. 1367ff.

The explanation of **the loveris maladye of hereos** — a term long misunderstood — is due to Lowes, who in an enormously learned and extremely interesting article (*MPh*, XI, 491–546), showed that it was a form of erotic hysteria clearly recognized and fully discussed by the principal medical authorities of the Middle Ages. The term **amor hereos** was ultimately derived from the Greek word ἔρος ('love'), but was influenced in both form and meaning by Latin **herus** ('master') and **heros** ('hero'). It was recognized as having many stages or degrees and as passing over into the more extreme mania: "Unless **hereos** is cured, they [the sufferers] fall into **mania** or die" [Bernard]. **Mania** might be engendered by any of the four humors, but the **mania** that is akin to **amor hereos** comes, like that, from **melancholia.** Its location is that given by Chaucer (l. 1376); "Mania quidem est infectio anterioris cellulae

capitis" [Arnaldus de Villanova]. That the reading of the best MSS is correct and that Ha⁴ is wrong in inserting **in** after **Biforen** is proved by a passage in Bernard, which I will translate: "It is to be understood that the brain (cerebrum) has three cells, the first in the front part, the second in the middle, the third behind. In the front part of the first cell is seated common sense . . . In the hinder part of the first cell is seated fantasy."

1377. **up-so-doun,** an idiomatic phrase which has been displaced by *upside down.*

1378. **habit.** Of the many possible meanings of this word, 'bodily condition' seems to be the most probable, as contrasted with **disposicion,** which implies mental condition.

1379. **Daun,** frequently spelled **Dan.** This word, like the Spanish **don,** is derived from Latin **dominus** and is merely a title of respect, like *Mr.* It is, apparently, not used with family names, but only with given names. Tennyson therefore in "The Dream of Fair Women" should have said "Dan Geoffrey," not "Dan Chaucer."

1386. **murie,** this word is usually spelled **mery.** It occurs in rhyme only twice in *CT,* once here and once in the *Prologue,* 802, where it rhymes with **Caunterbury.** As the *u* in *Canterbury* represents an older *y,* pronounced like ĭ, (Kentish ĕ) and as we have several rhymes of the spelling **merye** — I, 207 (: **berye**), I, 3067 (: **serye,** 'series'), IV, 615 (: **herye,** OE **herian**), and the rhyme **mery is,** rhyming with **beryis,** 'berries' (VII, 4156) — we should probably pronounce the word here as if spelled **merry** or **mirry.** The latter pronunciation is rendered probable by the only other rhyme which occurs for **Mercurie: porfurie** (porphyry), VIII, 775.

1387f. Chaucer tells us that the messenger Mercury was arrayed as he was when he put the hundred-eyed Argus to sleep. (Ovid, *Met,* i, 671–716.) Here he has laid aside his winged shoes; in Ovid he laid aside his hat also. **slepy yerde** apparently translates *somniferam virgam* of Claudian, *De Raptu Proserpinae,* i, 178.

1418. **fil in office,** 'got employment.'

1423. Cf. I, 545.

1428. In *Tes,* iv, 3, Arcite assumes the name of **Penteo.** Chaucer took the name **Philostrate** from the title of another poem of Boccaccio's, which he later translated under the title of **Troilus and Creseyde.** Boccaccio had taken over **Philostrato** from the Greek. It ought to mean 'army lover,' but Boccaccio confused the last part of it with the Latin **stratus,** and explained it to mean 'vanquished by love,' and this is the sense in which Chaucer uses it here.

1444. **honestly and slyly.** Neither of these words has its modern meaning. **honestly** retains the sense of the Latin **honeste,** 'fittingly,' that is in accordance with his pretended status; **slyly** does not imply trickery, but only prudence.

1460. Cf. § 153.

1463. I think that by **the thridde nyght** Chaucer means 'the night preceding the third day'; for the reasons for this as the date of meeting, see note on l. 1850, below.

1468. Boccaccio gives the name of the friend as Panfilo, and tells in detail how the escape was effected. Chaucer rightly subordinates the incident.

1471f. For a full discussion of the fine opium of Thebes, which was especially soporific, see Emerson, *MPh*, XVII, 287ff.

1477. **nedes cost:** 'necessarily'; **cost** is from Icelandic **kostr**, 'manner, wise.'

1494. This fine line Chaucer took from Dante, *Purg.*, i, 20.

1495. Hinckley produces evidence to show that here and in 1641 **greves** means 'bushes'; in 1507 it has the rarer sense of 'branches, sprays.'

1502. This line is repeated in *LGW*, 1204.

1509. Cf. *TC*, ii, 920:

·Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene.

1512. **grene;** probably with reference to the controversy of "the flower and the leaf"; cf. *LGW* (F), 188–93.

1518. El has **afered of his deeth thanne.**

1522. Skeat quotes this old proverb in English, Latin, and German versions.

1524. **at unset stevene,** 'at unappointed hour'; cf. "And atte laste thei sette steven that the knight shulde come (*La Tour*, p. 6). The proverbial character of the saying is evident in the passage quoted by Skeat from *Sir Eglamour*, l. 1282:

Hyt is sothe seyde, be God of heven,
Mony metyn at onsett stevyn.

1539. A proverbial expression meaning that Friday is seldom like the rest of the days of the week; cf. *Lowes*, *MLR*, IX, 94, Koch, *Anglia Beiblatt*, XXV, 333ff.

1559. According to classic tradition, the fall of Thebes was due to the wrath of Juno. Note that Arcite here regards Mars as his enemy; cf. 2367ff.

1560. **kynrede.** The other seven printed texts have **lynage.** The scribe of El may have made the change unconsciously.

1566. One of the many instances of Chaucer's persistent determinism; the same figure occurs in *LGW*, 2629; cf. Hibbard, *PhQ*, I, 222–25.

1591. In *Tes*, Arcite is discovered by Palamon's friend Panfilo, and Palamon escapes from the prison for the express purpose of meeting and fighting with Arcite.

1606. **love is fre:** a proverbial saying.

1625f. Chaucer is translating *Tes*, v, st. 13:

. . . signoria
Ne amore sta bene in compagnia;

but the idea was a familiar one, due perhaps to Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, iii, 564:

Non bene cum sociis regna Venusque manent.

The fact that Matthieu de Vendôme *Ars Versificatoria*, iii, 10, quotes this passage to express impatience of rivalry supports this suggestion. The passage usually cited (Ovid, *Met.*, ii, 846f.), merely means that dignity and love are incompatible.

1626. **hir thankes**: an idiom meaning 'willingly.'

1638. This fine simile was doubtless suggested by *Tes*, vii, st. 106f., but Chaucer has made it more effective by transferring it from the tournament to the lonely combat between Palamon and Arcite.

1660. A not uncommon exaggeration. Hinckley quotes *Richard Cœur de Lion*, 5814–16 and *Havelok*, 2684–87. It occurs also in the Icelandic saga of *Gunnlaugr Ormstunga*.

1665. **hath seyn biforn**, 'hath foreseen.' Chaucer's use of the idea of predestination gives to this story and to that of *TC* something of the tragic dignity connected with the Greek idea of fate.

1668f. Translated from *Tes*, v, st. 77. Cook (*MLN*, XXII, 207) quotes passages to show that it was proverbial both in Chaucer's time and in Shakespeare's.

1678. **hunte**, 'hunter.' OE had two synonymous words, **hunta** and **huntere**. The former survived in Shakespeare's "mouse-hunt" and still survives in the family name Hunt.

1697. **Under the sonne he looketh.** This expression has been the subject of considerable discussion. See especially *MLN* XXXVII, pp. 120, 376, 377 and XXXVIII, p. 59. Tatlock seems right in insisting upon a distinction between **all under the sun**, meaning 'all around' and Chaucer's **under the sonne**, meaning 'in the direction of the sun.'

1707. **up peyne**; El has **up on peyne**, but the usual 14th c. idiom is **up peyne**.

1710. **mystiers**, the reading of El, is probably an error for **myster** ('kind of').

1739. We should say 'doom and death.'

1746. To torture you to force a confession.

1748. "Boccaccio says little of the anger of Theseus and nothing whatever of any intercession by the queen. Chaucer seems to have had in mind the celebrated occasion when Edward III condemned to death six citizens of Calais but revoked the sentence, unwillingly and after a struggle, at the entreaties of the good Queen Philippa. See Froissart (ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove), V, 204–05" (Hinckley, p. 75). Froissart says that Chaucer's father-in-law,

Sir Paonnet de Roet, was with Queen Philippa on this occasion. But the whole incident has been questioned by historians. In any event, Chaucer is more likely to have been thinking of Queen Anne's intercession for all offenders in 1382 (Knighton, II, 151). Her later intercessions were numerous.

1761. Chaucer uses this line four times. Cf. IV, 1986, V, 479, *LGW*, 503. It seems to have been suggested by Dante's:

Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende. — (*Inf.* v, 100)

1781. **after oon,** 'according to the same rule' (Skeat); cf. I, 341.

1785. This is the only passage in Chaucer in which **benedicite** has five syllables — perhaps because it is spoken meditatively. Usually it has three; cf. note on II, 1170. For the sentiment expressed in this and the following lines Skeat refers to *RR*, ll. 878–84.

1799 The sentiment was familiar to every mediaeval schoolboy. One of the first books in the course in Latin was the *Sententiae Pueriles* of Publilius Sirus, the fifteenth sententia being: "Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur" (to love and be wise is scarcely granted even to God).

1806. **game,** 'joke.'

1808. **Kan hem . . . thank,** 'feels grateful to them'; cf. Fr **savoir grè.**

1810. **of,** perhaps a mistake for **or.**

1814. **servant,** a technical term for a lover; cf. I, 1923.

1827. 'They did him homage.'

1829. **To speke of,** 'with regard to,' 'speaking of'; cf. I, 413.

1838. Slang; 'he may go whistle.'

1839. **now,** perhaps jocose.

1850. **fifty wykes,** a loose expression for 'a year.' Boccaccio says "un anno intero," and it is obvious that this was what Chaucer intended, although he says "fifty wykes fer ne ner." Skeat, assuming that Chaucer fitted the dates of the escape, the encounter in the forest, and the tournament to the calendar of the year in which he was writing *KT*, attempted to determine what year this would be. He interpreted **the thridde nyght in May** (ll. 1462f.) to mean the night following and completing May 3. As Palamon and Arcite met the next morning, a Friday, and fought the next day, the date of the fight would be Saturday, May 5, and the Sunday in the following year on which the assembly for the tournament occurred would also be May 5. The calendar shows that May 5 fell on a Sunday in 1381 and 1387. Skeat, therefore, settled upon 1386–87 as the date at which Chaucer was writing *KT*. But Chaucer's mention of the story of Palamon and Arcite in *LGW* (l. 420) renders so late a date highly improbable. The dates in 1380–81 would fulfil the conditions of the tale equally well, but the arrival of Queen Anne — an event supposed to be alluded to in l. 884 — did not occur until December 18, 1381.

There is, however, no justification for the assumption that Chaucer's choice of the dates was dependent upon the calendar of the year in which he was writing.

It is, on the contrary, highly probable that his reason for placing the escape of Palamon and meeting with Arcite on May 3 was that May 3 was an unlucky day — being one of the *dies mali* or *dies Aegyptiaci* (see below) — in itself unlucky for beginning any undertaking and of course doubly so when it fell on a Friday (cf. ll. 1534–39 and VII, 4531).

The choice of dates for the events of other stories was based on similar reasons. In *NPT*, for example, Chaunticleer's dream and his seizure by the fox occur on the night and morning of Friday, May 3 (cf. VII, 4377–85 and 4531). In *MrT*, the language first used in expressing the date of the assignation in the garden (IV, 2132f.) is obscure:

> . . . . er that dayes eighte
> Were passed, er the month of Juyl (*so all MSS*).

But that the time meant is early in June is proved by ll. 2222ff.:

> He [the Sun] was that tyme in Geminis, as I gesse,
> But litel fro his declynacioun
> Of Cancer, Jovis exaltacioun;

for the sun passes out of Gemini and attains his greatest declination, in the first degree of Cancer, on June 12. Taken together, the two passages indicate June 8 as the date intended; and June 8 was regarded as one of the "very unlucky" days. In *FrT* (V, 906) the day on which Dorigen made her rash promise to Aurelius was May 6 —

> And this was on the sixte morwe of May.

Finally, in *TC* (ii, 55f.) the day on which Pandarus visited Criseyde to urge the suit of Troylus was May 3:

> . . . . it so bitidde,
> As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde.

Doubtless many variant lists of lucky and unlucky days were current in Chaucer's time, and it would be difficult to decide which he made use of. There are two that he may easily have known. The first is the list of *dies Aegyptiaci* (explanations of which Ducange, s.v. *dies*, quotes from Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, and Durandus, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*). The list is expressed in the mnemonic distich:

> Augurior decios, audito lumine clangor,
> Liquit olens Abies, coluit Colus, excute Gallus.

The words represent the months, in regular order; the initial letter of the first syllable of each word expresses the first unlucky day in the month, counting from the beginning of the month, the initial of the second syllable expresses the second unlucky day, counting from the end of the month (the letters *h* and *j* are disregarded). The results are: January 1 and 25; February 4 and 26; March 1 and 28; April 10 and 20; May 3 and 25; June 10 and 16; July 13 and 22; August 1 and 30; September 3 and 21; October 3 and 22; November 5 and 28; December 7 and 22. The list used by Chaucer seems, however, to have been more like that quoted by Brand-Ellis (*Popular Antiquities*, II,

48) from a calendar prefixed to Grafton's *Manual*, or Abridgement of his Chronicle, 1565 (other editions have a different list):

> "January 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, 29, very unlucky. February 26, 27, 28, unlucky; 8, 10, 17, very unlucky. March 16, 17, 20, very unlucky. April 7, 8, 10, 20, unlucky; 16, 21, very unlucky. May 3, 6, unlucky; 7, 15, 20, very unlucky. June 10, 22, unlucky; 4, 8, very unlucky. July 15, 21, very unlucky. August 1, 29, 30, unlucky; 19, 20, very unlucky. September 2, 4, 21, 23, unlucky; 6, 7, very unlucky. October 4, 16, 24, unlucky; 6, very unlucky. November 5, 6, 29, 30, unlucky; 15, 20, very unlucky. December 15, 22, unlucky; 6, 7, 9, very unlucky."

Finally, it may be pointed out that if the *thridde nyght* (I, 1463) means the night preceding May 3, the only date between 1370–71 and 1392–93 when the calendar would fit the conditions in *KT* is 1381–82. I will not attempt to marshall all the arguments for this view but will only point out that, in ME, **to-nyght** regularly means the night just past (cf. VII, 4116).

All the dates in the story except May 3 are determined absolutely by the astrological scheme of planetary hours and days which controls the events of the story. The first meeting of Palamon and Arcite is appropriately on Friday, because that is the day of Venus; and at the first hour after sunrise, because that is the hour of Venus. The interrupted combat occurs on the next day, because that is the day of Saturn, and apparently at the first hour of the day, which is the hour of Saturn. The tournament cannot occur on Sunday, the day of the Sun, but since Arcite, who worships Mars, is to be victorious, must occur on Tuesday, the day of Mars. The visits of Palamon, Emelye, and Arcite to the shrines of Venus, Diana, and Mars occur in the order of the planetary hours, near the beginning of Monday morning: that of Palamon in the second hour before sunrise (ll. 2209–11), an hour sacred to the goddess and planet Venus; that of Emelye in the first hour of the morning (ll. 2271–74), because that hour was sacred to the goddess Diana and her planet, the Moon; that of Arcite three hours later, in the hour sacred to the god and planet Mars.

For the system of planetary hours upon which all this depends, see Introd. p. 143f.

1860. **to wyve**: 'for wife,' a petrified dative; cf. § 16.

1881. Tournaments were among the greatest and most popular spectacles of the Middle Ages. In 1390 Chaucer, as Clerk of the King's Works, had the duty of erecting the lists for two splendid tournaments at Smithfield, one in May and one in October.

1894. Observe the metre.

1906. I have adopted the reading of MS Ad^3. The wide variation in the readings of the MSS indicates that there was some defect in the original MS.

1910. Hinckley suggests that **reed coral**, mentioned here and in other accounts of palaces, was really red porphyry. He is wrong, however, in think-

ing that alabaster was an unusual building material. A white stone called by that name was used for buildings in 14th c. England.

1913. **doon wroght,** 'caused (to be) made'; cf. **han doon fraught,** II, 171, and **doon yow kept,** IV, 1098.

1918ff. The description of the temple of Venus is only loosely imitated from Boccaccio. Chaucer had already used a closer imitation in *PF*, ll. 183–294. The personification of abstract qualities, as here and in the descriptions of the other oratories, was a commonplace of mediaeval poetry, but allegorical wall-paintings were common not merely in Italy, where Chaucer probably saw some of the masterpieces of the early Italian painters, but also in France and England.

1936. Venus derived her name Cytherea from the island of Cythera, near which she is said to have risen from the sea. In connecting her with Mount Cithaeron, Chaucer and other poets were misled by the likeness of the two names, and perhaps also, as Hinckley has suggested, by *Aeneid*, x, 51 or 86.

1940. In *RR*, Idleness is the porter of the garden in which the Rose is kept.

1941ff. For the stories about the persons in classical mythology mentioned here and later, see Gayley, *Classic Myths in English Literature*, or Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable*.

1955. Skeat thinks the description of the statue of Venus was derived by Chaucer from the *De Deorum Imaginibus* of a twelfth century Londoner known as Albricus Philosophus.

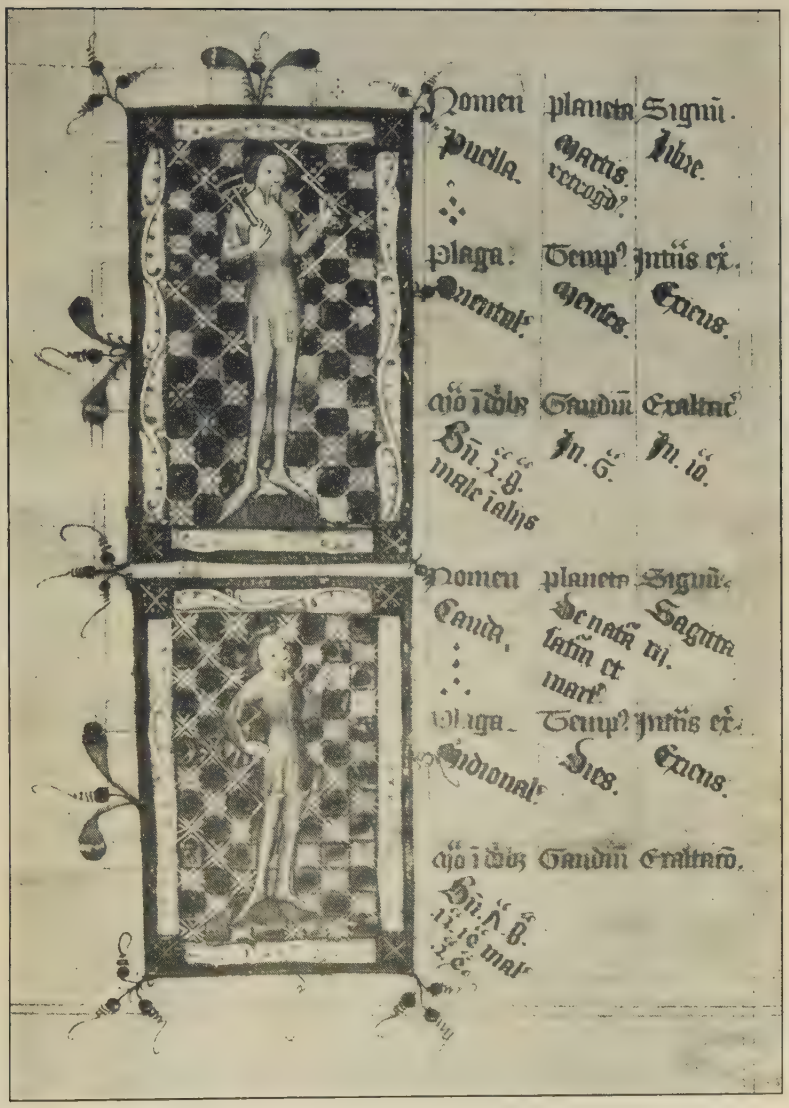
1962. In Boccaccio the doves were real ones flying above the temple; cf. *PF*, 237f.

1970ff. The temple painted on the wall is largely derived from Boccaccio's account of the temple of Mars in Thrace.

1971. **estres.** This usually means the inner parts of a building, and perhaps Chaucer means that the walls of this temple were painted like those of the great temple in Thrace.

1987. **The northren lyght** probably does not refer to the Aurora Borealis.

1995. **Ther saugh I.** This and similar expressions in ll. 2011, 2017, 2028, 2056, 2062, 2065, 2067, 2073, were undoubtedly suggested by expressions in *Tes.* Boccaccio represents the prayers of Palamon, Arcite, and Emelye as taking human form and, after visiting the distant temples of the gods, returning to report what they had seen and heard. Some editors regard these passages as belonging to the earlier version of the Palamon and Arcite story, which they supposed to be closely translated from Boccaccio. Hinckley thinks that Chaucer meant originally to imply that he had seen the temples yet standing during his continental travels. It seems more probable that both in these instances and in l. 1918, where Chaucer is not translating Boccaccio, he is merely using a device to secure vividness of expression.



Geomantic Figures

From MS Bodley 581, a treatise written for King Richard II in March 1391.

1996ff. It is perhaps worthy of note that the personified abstractions in this passage are derived from Boccaccio, while the concrete images, the **pykepurs,** the **smylere,** and the **shepne** are Chaucer's additions.

2002. Hinckley suggests that this is derived from "la morte armata" (*Tes*, vii, st. 35) by a misreading of "marte" for "morte," but it seems more likely that it is derived from ll. 4–6 of the same stanza:

> Ed ogni altare quivi era copioso
> Di sangue sol nelle battaglie fuore
> De' corpi uman cacciato.

2007. The semicolon after l. 2006 seems necessary, as it is obvious that the slayer of himself could not drive the nail into his own head. Koch arbitrarily wishes to read **of her husband** instead of **of hym self** in l. 2005.

2017. **shippes hoppesteres:** a much discussed passage. It is obviously derived from "navi bellatrici" of *Tes*, vii, 37 (fighting ships), but Chaucer may have read "ballatrici" and taken the word to mean 'dancers' or 'dancing.' The burning of the ships is not in Boccaccio; Chaucer introduces it to connect them with Mars.

2021. Liddell places a colon after **foryeten.** I prefer the punctuation of most editors, but I take "by" to mean 'with reference to,' 'concerning'; **cf.**

> This balade may ful wel ysongen be,
> As I have seyde erst, by my lady fre. — *LGW* (F), 271.

2029. Chaucer knew the story of Damocles from Boethius, bk. iii, pr. 5.

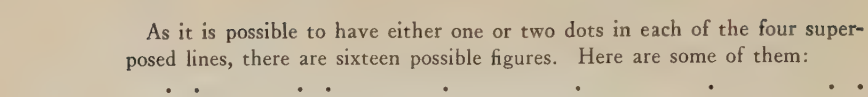
2031–34. Chaucer probably had in mind the passage from Bernardus Sylvester quoted in connection with II, 197–203.

2035. **by figure.** This seems to be a technical astrological term referring to a drawing or horoscope showing the positions of the heavenly bodies.

2037. **sterres.** Apparently the original MS had **st'res** (abb. for **sterres**). Many of the MSS misplaced the abbreviation and wrote **sertres;** El, not understanding this, wrote **certres.**

2045. **Puella** and **Rubeus** do not belong to astrology proper, but to geomancy, a sort of substitute for astrology. In geomancy, readings of astrological influences were obtained from certain numbers of dots set down at random. The process was as follows: Take a piece of paper and make without counting them a number of dots. Then count them, to see whether they are odd or even. If they are even, put down two dots, if they are odd, put down one. Repeat this three more times, placing each result below the preceding one. This will give a geomantic figure consisting of four lines of dots, in ones and twos, arranged one above another; see below for examples. With these as a basis, a horoscope can be drawn up or any particular question can be answered astrologically.

As it is possible to have either one or two dots in each of the four superposed lines, there are sixteen possible figures. Here are some of them:



These are called: (1) *Rubeus*, (2) *Albus*, (3) *Puella*, (4) *Puer*, (5) *Fortuna Minor*, (6) *Fortuna Major*. I give these names according to a treatise in MS Bodley 581 which was prepared for Richard II in March 1393. Skeat says that Chaucer was mistaken in assigning *Puella* to Mars, but this treatise gives: "*Puella* Martis retrograd" (fo. 19) and "*Rubeus* Martis direct" (fo. 20). The experts differ as to the forms and assignment of *Puella* and *Puer* (No. 4). Robert Flud, *De Animae Intellectualis Scientia seu Geomantia* (in *Fasciculus Geomanticus*, Verona, 1687) agrees with Chaucer, MSS Bodley 581 and Harley 671. Some other writers call No. 4 *Puella* and No. 3 *Puer*.

2047f. Suggested, says Skeat, by Albricus (cf. note on l. 1955): "Ante illum vero lupus ovem portans pingebatur, quia illud scilicet animal ab antiquis gentibus ipsi Marti specialiter consecratum est. Iste enim *Mavors* est, id est *mares vorans*."

2049. The MSS read **was depeynted.** The metre can be remedied either by reading **depeynt** or reversing the order of **was depeynted.**

2056. **Calistopee.** Boccaccio gives the name correctly as Callisto. Hinckley suggests that Chaucer confused the name with Calliope, but it does not appear why he should have done so, and the more I study Chaucer the less am I inclined to ascribe to him any deviation from the best knowledge of his day. The story of Callisto is first told by Ovid. Gower retells it, *CA*, vi, 225–37, but calls her Calistona. Chaucer's version seems to us a little confused. Callisto was changed to the constellation of the Great Bear, and her son into Boötes. But Chaucer had authority for his statements. Boccaccio (*De Genealogia Deorum*, v, 49) says: "Calisto autem ursa minor dicta est, ubi major vocatus est Arcas."

2062. Ovid is also the source of the story of Daphne, a girl beloved by Apollo and changed into a laurel. The form **Dane** Chaucer probably derived from some French source. Gower also tells the story, *CA*, III, 1685–1720. The stories of Actaeon and Atalanta are also from Ovid.

2075. **seet.** The usual form of the singular is **sat.** The plural is **seeten,** from which this form may be derived.

2082ff. Diana was the triform goddess (cf. ll. 2297ff. and 2313): in heaven Luna (the Moon); on earth Diana and Lucina (goddess of childbirth); and in the underworld Proserpina.

2103. A frequent expression for ability in fighting; cf. the Shakespearean "a tall man of his hands."

2112. **paramours,** not a noun, but an adverb meaning 'with passion,' 'in the manner of lovers'; cf. note on l. 1155.

2128. Chaucer's description of Lygurge combines features from Boccaccio's descriptions of Agamennone and Evandro.

2133. **grifphon.** Whether griffin here refers to a species of vulture or to the fabulous animal with the head, front, and wings of an eagle and the body and hind quarters of a lion has been debated. The suggestion that it means a pirate, or robber, takes no account of the context (*MLN*, XXII, 47–49).

2139. **trays,** plural. Our word *traces* is really a double plural.

2141. **nayles yelewe.** In *Tes*, vi, 36, the nails of the bear's paws seem to have been gilded.

2142, 2144. **for old** and **for blak,** idiomatic, meaning 'on account of age' and 'with regard to blackness.' This explanation of the idiom was given in class many years ago by Professor Child.

2148. **alauntz,** 'huge wolfhounds.' Cook (*Conn. Ac.* XXI, 128, XXIII, 30) thinks Chaucer must have seen them in Italy (cf. Baillie-Grohman, ch. xvi).

2155ff. The name **Emetreus** seems derived by accident from Demetrius. The description of this hero, who is not mentioned by Boccaccio, is decidedly individual and somewhat suggestive of King Richard II; cf. especially ll. 2165–70. Hinckley's suggestion that the high nose is an Asiatic touch is perhaps over-subtle.

2160. **clooth of Tars.** See Skeat's long note on *PP*, xvii, 299. **Tars** (Latinized **Tarsicus** and **Tartarinus**) was a fine silk imported from China through Tartary.

2172. Chaucer's heroes are usually from twenty to twenty-five years of age.

2178. Hinckley sees in the white hunting eagle a further Asiatic touch, and still another in the lions and leopards of l. 2186. Certainly they are appropriate enough for the king of Inde; but Deschamps uses the leopard to signify the king of England (cf. Deschamps, X, 205, for references).

2209ff. The hour indicated is the twenty-third hour of Sunday. This was chosen by Palamon because it was the hour of Venus (cf. ll. 2216f. and Introd. p. 143) and was therefore an appropriate time for an appeal to her.

2223. Translated from *Tes*, vii, 43, 3.

2271ff. The third hour after Palamon's appeal to Venus was the first hour of Monday and therefore appropriate for Emily's appeal to Diana or the moon.

2273. Cf. 2212.

2281. Mather pointed out that this line is a curious misreading of *Tes*, vii, 72:

> Fu mondo il tempio e di be' drappi ornato
> (The temple was clean and decked with fine hangings).

Chaucer's manuscript may have had **Fumando** ('smoking') for **Fu mondo** ('was clean'). The absolute participial construction was recommended by the rhetoricians and much used by Chaucer.

2294. Statius has nothing about the tale of Palamon and Arcite.

2367ff. The first hours of Monday are assigned as follows: 1, the Moon; 2, Saturn; 3, Jupiter; 4, Mars. The next hour of Mars is therefore the fourth hour of Monday, which was appropriately chosen for Arcite's appeal to that god.

2373ff. The prayer is based on *Tes*, vii, 24–28.

2398. **mercy heete,** 'promise mercy,' the current expression for 'grant love.'

2399. **in the place;** Hinckley shows that this means 'in the lists.'

2415ff. There is probably no connection between this vow and that of the Nazarites.

2423. Rings were not uncommon on ancient doors. They may have been used as knockers.

2449. An ancient proverb; cf. *TC*, iv, 1456, and *The Proverbs of Alfred* (*EETS*), p. 136. In general, I have not noted easily recognizable proverbs; and I see no justification for multiplying references to those that are familiar.

2454. The planet Saturn, before the discovery of Neptune and Uranus, had the largest known orbit. Mediaeval astrology confused or identified the gods and their planets. Curry seems to me wrong in treating this as special to Chaucer.

2462. Saturn is particularly malign when in the zodiacal sign of the lion.

2469. **lookyng:** 'astrological aspect.'

2503. **Nailynge the speres:** see *Arch*, LVII, pt. 1, pp. 40–42. The metal head of the spear was fastened upon the spear shaft by a nail which passed through a hole in the head and the shaft, just as the head of a golfing iron is fastened to its shaft.

2504. **Giggynge,** 'fitting the shield with straps'; the *g*'s are hard.

2519. **he,** used like a demonstrative pronoun = 'that fellow'; cf. ll. 2606, 2609, 2612, etc.

2523. Several MSS omit **that.** Chaucer's fondness for beginning sentences with a participial construction favors this reading.

2544. **shot,** 'arrow' or 'crossbow bolt.'

2602. **sadly in arrest,** 'firmly into the rest,' where the spear was held in charging.

2626. Probably the vale of Gargaphie, where Actaeon was turned into a stag (Ovid, *Met*, III, 155f.).

2637ff. The tournament occurred on Tuesday (l. 2491) and lasted until late in the day (l. 2637). The success of Arcite is well accounted for by the fact that the whole day belonged to Mars, to whom he had appealed. But it does not seem likely that success came in an hour belonging especially to Mars, as the only hour in the afternoon belonging to him would be the eighth,

lasting approximately from 1.10 to 2.20 p.m. This seems too early for the indication given in l. 2637. The misfortune of Arcite can hardly have occurred in an hour belonging to Venus, for the next hour of Venus would be the tenth. Curry thinks it occurred in the next hour of Saturn, which came immediately after sunset.

2681. One group of the manuscripts has here two additional lines, which do not seem in harmony with Chaucer's presentation of Emily:

For wommen as to speken in comune,
Thei folwen all the favour of fortune.

2683. Furnivall unnecessarily inserted **in** before **chiere.**

2684. **furie.** One group of manuscripts has **fir,** but **furie** is correct.

2696. **korven out.** The armor was so securely fastened together that it had to be cut apart.

2743ff. For such an injury as Arcite had suffered the mediaeval treatment consisted in attempting to reduce the swelling and draw off the pus by blood-letting, cupping, and the use of purgative drinks made of herbs. **veyne blood** (l. 2747) seems to mean 'drawing off the venous blood,' although OED has no other example of this meaning. **Ventusinge** (l. 2747) is defined by OED only as 'drawing blood by means of a cupping glass,' but modern French physicians use ventousing to reduce congestion by setting up a counter-irritation, without blood-letting. But medical remedies failed to remove the corrupted and clotted blood. Moreover, Nature — that is, the tendency of the human body to heal itself — had lost its power. The "virtues" (forces controlling the processes of life) were three: the natural (originating in the liver), the vital or spiritual (seated in the heart), and the animal (working through the brain). The *virtus naturalis* could originate an impulse to expell venom from the system but the actual work of expulsion could be effected only by the *virtus animalis.* In this case the *virtus animalis,* acting for the *virtus naturalis,* was unable to effect the expulsion. For a fuller discussion, see Lanfranc (pp. 50–58 and 161–66) or Curry (pp. 139–48). In 2750, modern editors adopt **Fro** from El; the correct reading, **For,** is found in Dd, Ha^4 and several other MSS. Curry retains **Fro,** against the whole tenor of his discussion.

2775. **wyf.** In *Tes,* ix, st. 83 Arcita marries Emelye on his deathbed, but Chaucer may use this term merely to indicate Arcite's devotion.

2809f. At this point, Boccaccio describes the passage of Arcite's soul, but curiously enough Chaucer translates and uses Boccaccio's lines in *TC,* v, 1807–27, omitting them here.

2817. No modern poet would use such words as **shrieked** and **howled** in a serious passage like this, but earlier writers and readers seemed to have felt no comic effects from them.

2874. White gloves were used as mourning at the funeral of an unmarried person.

2895. Turkish bows are frequently mentioned in mediaeval romances as especially good.

2959. Tyrwhitt says, "Chaucer seems to have confounded the wake plays of his own times with the funeral games of the ancients." But funeral games were of much the same general character all over the world; cf. the familiar account that Wulfstan gave King Alfred of the funeral customs among the Esthonians.

2967. Boccaccio makes the marriage take place after only a few days.

2968. Liddell puts a period at the end of this line and takes l. 2969 with what follows. This is possible, but if Chaucer had intended this construction he would perhaps have avoided ambiguity by placing l. 2970 before l. 2969.

2987ff. Theseus's speech is based principally upon Boethius (i, m. 5; ii, m. 8). **The faire cheyne of love** was probably derived by Chaucer directly from *RR*, ll. 16,786f.:

La bele chaene doree,
Qui les quatre elemens enlace.

Of course the idea goes back to Plato. The latter part of the passage, ll. 3017ff., is based largely upon Boccaccio.

3042. Still a familiar quotation. St. Jerome is the first writer known to have used it: "Facis de necessitate virtutem" (*Adv. Rufinum*, 3, 2).

3084. **a kynges brother sone.** Emerson thinks this may have been intended as a compliment to King Richard, whose father's brother, John of Gaunt, was, in the right of his wife, king of Castile and Leon; but this seems a doubtful compliment to offer to one who was himself the king of England.

THE WORDS BITWENE THE HOOST AND THE MILLERE

I 3124. **Pilates voys.** In the mediaeval Corpus Christi plays Pilate and Herod were commonly represented as violent, ranting characters.

3125. **By armes,** etc.: cf. VI, 472–75, 649–59.

3139. **Mysspeke or seye;** i.e. misspeke or misseye; cf. § 100.

3140. **Wyte** may take two objects, without a preposition; cf. § 155.

3155f. These two lines are not in most of the MSS. The first is almost identical with *LGW* (G), 277.

3170 **Mathynketh: me athynketh.**

THE MILLERES TALE (3187–3854)

The Miller's Tale is a vulgar tale of the fabliau type, reciting a deceit practised on a carpenter. Though the precise source of this tale has not been found, parallels to its incidents have been pointed out; cf. Barnouw, *MLR*, VII 145–48. As the other versions do not involve a carpenter, it is probable that

this feature was introduced here to exploit the enmity of the Miller for the Reeve. If this is true, the tales of Miller and Reeve were not only assigned to them but written especially for them.

The Miller's Tale, as a whole, is not fit to be read in a mixed company, but the portraits of the Oxford student, the carpenter's wife, and the parish clerk are brilliant examples of Chaucer's latest and best methods of portraiture. They are therefore included in our selections.

3191. **Art:** no doubt the "seven arts" constituting the mediaeval curriculum.

3193. **a certeyn of conclusions:** a certain number of astrological operations; cf. note on V, 1263.

The questions here alluded to are known as horary questions. When information is desired concerning the result of any undertaking or any impending event an astrological figure is erected for the minute in which the question was asked. The answer is given by inspection of the positions and relations of the heavenly bodies at this time. The rules concerning horary questions are numerous and elaborate. A full statement of them would require a whole volume. Even those concerning the weather are too numerous to be set forth here. The reason for the specific reference to Nicholas's skill in weather predictions is that the later intrigue of the story requires the prediction of a rain greater than "Noees flood."

3208. **Almageste:** a famous treatise by Ptolemy, the founder of astronomy and astrology. The name is a combination of the Arabic definitive article **al** with the Greek adjective μεγίστη (greatest).

3209. **astrelabie:** a simple instrument much used for observation of the heavenly bodies. Chaucer wrote a treatise on the use of it for his "litle son Lowys."

3210. **augrim stones:** Karpinski says that these were counters marked with Arabic numerals and used for calculations on the abacus. **Augrim** is a popular form of **Algorithm** (or **Algorism**), which in turn is derived from **Al Khowārizmi,** the name of a distinguished Arabic mathematician (*MLN*, XXVII, 206–209).

3216. **Angelus ad virginem:** This beautiful anthem is printed in the Chaucer Society edition of MS Harley 7334, with a facsimile from a MS of c. 1260. The MS gives the Latin text, an English version, and the music. Very different from this pious song — probably even ribald — must have been **the kinges noote.** In *The Complaint of Scotland* (EETS ed. p. 64) the shepherds "excedit al thir foure marmadyns in melodius music." Among the songs they sang were: "Stil vndir the leyuis grene; Lady, help your prisoneir; *Kyng Villyamis note;* Trolee, lolee, lemmen dou; and The Frog cam to the myl dur."

3227f. The *Disticha Catonis de Moribus* were almost as highly esteemed for wisdom in the Middle Ages as the proverbs of Solomon, and were perhaps even better known; for they were studied in the grammar schools. They are bits of proverbial wisdom, expressed in pairs of hexameters. Their composi-

tion is assigned to the 3rd or 4th century; their author is unknown, but our ancestors credited them to the elder Cato.

3256. The Tower of London was the seat of the mint and of the King's treasury.

3268. **a primerole:** a primrose, a daisy, or a cowslip. **Piggesnye** has long been used as a term of endearment, but no explanation of its use has been given until recently. Of course it ought to be a flower. Henslow (*Medical Works of the Fourteenth Century*, 1899, p. 237) so lists it, with a query. In *Dialect Notes*, V (1923), 245, Garrett reported that in Minnesota and other states of the Northwest 'pig's eye' is a name for *trillium*. In Essex it is a name for the cuckoo flower (Eng. Dialect Dict. s.v. *pig*).

3318. **Powles window:** the open work ornamentation of Absolon's shoes is compared to the tracery of a window in St. Paul's. Possibly the expression was already current colloquially.

THE PROLOGE OF THE REVES TALE

3860. **Osewold.** This name must have been very rare in the district in which Chaucer places the Reeve. Although common enough farther north, I have found no instance of it in Norfolk records of the fourteenth century. It should be noted, however, that a *Passio S. Oswaldi*, extant in a thirteenth century MS, was written by a monk of Bury St. Edmund's, not far from the Reeve's home. Whether Chaucer was here careless of realistic detail or scrupulously accurate can hardly be decided.

3861. The unnamed London carpenter does not seem to have taken offence — which is perhaps a reason for thinking that the enmity between Miller and Reeve was of long standing. Why these two men should lay the scenes of their tales in the two university towns is a puzzle for which Miss Rickert will soon suggest a solution. The local color in both is astonishingly accurate.

3864. **So theek:** so thee ik, "so may I thrive." **Ik** is the northern form of **ich** ('I'). In the tale itself the dialect words occur mainly if not exclusively in the speeches of the two northern students. The absence of such words from the language of the teller of the tale is capable of several explanations.

3888. **a coltes tooth;** cf. III, 602, a popular expression for a lascivious tendency.

3905–08. The pilgrims seem to have got an early start (I, 822ff.), but now at half-past seven (**half-way prime**) are only about four miles from Southwark. Ogilby's map of the Canterbury Road in 1675 (reprinted in *Notes on the Road from London to Canterbury*, *EETS*) gives the distance from the center of London to Deptford as five miles. The *British Road Book* (Cyclists' Touring Club), vol. I, Route I, gives the distance from the Southwark end of London Bridge as four and a quarter miles. Greenwich lies just off the main road to the left. The Host's remark may be a sly dig at Chaucer, who probably lived there at this time.

3911. **sette his howve:** a variant of the slang phrase 'sette his cap,' see I, 586.

3919. In *Matt.* vii, 3 the Vulgate version, following the Greek, has **festucam,** "a stalk."

THE REVES TALE (3921–4324)

This tale also is of the fabliau type. The Reeve obviously makes the miller of his tale a twin brother of the Miller of the pilgrim group. The old mill-site on the brook, in the fen near Trumpington, can still be traced. A specimen of the tale will suffice.

3928. **turne coppes.** This expression has entirely baffled the commentators, perhaps because they were hunting for too significant a meaning. Possibly it means only that he was skilled in turning wooden cups on a lathe.

3931. **a joly poppere;** slang for a short dagger.

3935. **piled.** Curry (pp. 82f.) argues that "the hair of the Miller's head is thick (most likely bristly), and especially that it comes far down over his wide, 'villainous low' forehead." But Skeat was right. This miller was bald; otherwise his wife would never have mistaken his head for the white cap she supposed Aleyn to be wearing (4297–4306).

3949. Evidently the miller was not a serf, but a freeman, proud of his status.

4006ff. Quite in harmony with the traditional characteristics of the Northerner.

4014. **Strother.** There was a castle of Strother in Northumberland; and curiously enough, Aleyn was a name common in the Strother family. In Chaucer's time both Alan and John Strother were men of some importance in the North. Alan, particularly, held many offices which must have brought him into contact with Chaucer's circle — the Nevilles, Beauchamp, Stury, and the entourage of the Dowager Countess of Pembroke (Mary de St. Pol). There was a long-standing connection of the Strother family with the court, which must have made the name familiar there; but among the many tangled threads of association which may have led Chaucer to satirize the name, the exact clue has not yet been found.

4023. **fares:** Northern English. Chaucer's representation of the Northern dialect is accurate as far as he carries it, but he does not strive for consistency. The scribes of some of the MSS strengthen the dialectal coloring very considerably.

4040. El lacks **and,** but the scribe probably omitted it because he did not regard it as necessary.

4066. **wehee:** the usual imitation of a horse's neigh; cf. *PP,* iv, 22 and *Winner and Waster,* ll. 281–82.

4084. El omits **John,** by mistake.

4087. **Goddes:** El has **god,** by mistake.

THE PROLOGE OF THE COKES TALE (4325–4364)

4331. The apocryphal book *Ecclesiasticus* was commonly quoted as by Solomon. The reference here is to xi, 31 (29): "Bring not every man into thy house; for many are the snares of the deceitful."

4336. **Hogge** (pron. Hodge) is a nickname for **Roger** (l. 4353). Curry (p. 49) oddly supposes the Cook's name to be Roger Hogge.

In 1363 a London cook, Roger de Waltham, was condemned to the pillory for selling a peck of eels unfit for food (*Letter Book G*, p. 192). *Letter Book F* (p. 267) records a cook named John de Ware, on Jan. 20, 1356. It would be dangerous to assert that he was Hogge's father. The practises of the Cook are illustrated by a proclamation of the City authorities in 1388–89 forbidding "pastelors" to buy "garbage" of capons, guinea-fowls, or geese from "cooks of Bredestrete" or from the houses of lords for the purpose of making pasties for sale (*Letter Book H*, p. 338).

4346f. When a meat-pie was not sold the day it was cooked, the gravy was drawn off, so that the pie would keep longer. **Jakke of Dovere** seems to have been a slang term for such a pie. Skeat cites Roquefort's *Glossaire de la Langue Romane* for this meaning of **Jaquet, Jaket.** Brusendorff's skepticism is excessive, and his own interpretation of the passage highly improbable (p. 480).

4351. **stubble goos.** *OED* says "a goose fed with stubble"; the quotations show that it means an old goose fed on stubble, as opposed to a "green goose," i.e., a young goose, which had eaten grass.

4357. There were many Flemings in London in Chaucer's time (see note on VII, 4584); from whom Chaucer may have got this proverb and that in *McT* (IX, 350). Some of the MSS read **quaad spel** for **quaad pley,** perhaps attempting to make the whole proverb Flemish.

4358. **Herry Bailly** seems to have been the real name of the Host. In the Subsidy Rolls, 1380–81, for Southwark occurs the entry: "Henri' Bayliff, ostyler (innkeeper) Christian uxor eius 2 *s.*" He was a person of some local importance, being one of the controllers of the subsidy. A Henry Bailly, probably the same person, represented the borough of Southwark in Parliament in 1376 and 1378, and a Henry Bailly of Southwark was appointed special coroner in 1393 and 1394 (see Manly, *New Light*, pp. 79–82).

THE COOKES TALE (4325–4422)

4366. In view of Kuhl's discussion of vitailers and non-vitailers (see note on I, 361ff.), it may be significant that Chaucer makes this representative of the vitailers so shady a character.

4377. **Ridyng** was the usual term for a procession, religious or secular; cf. "the Riding of the George," Kelly, *Notices of Leicester*, pp. 38–51. Ridings were common features of mediaeval life. **Chepe,** "Cheapside," was one of the principal streets in the heart of the city. See the picture of "*The Procession*

of King Edward VI" in Harrison's *Desc. of England*, pt. III, Supp. (New Sh. Soc.).

4385. **ne was:** El has **nas.**

4402. The penalty for drawing sword or knife in the city was a fine of half a mark or 15 days imprisonment in Newgate prison; if blood was drawn, 20 *s.* fine or 60 days in prison (cf. *Liber Albus*, transl. Riley, p. 335). The city minstrels accompanied prisoners to the place of punishment (*ibid.* pp. 394–96).

4404. **his papir soghte,** examined his accounts; cf. *PP*, C, xiv, 38.

CkT is left fragmentary in all the MSS. Apparently Chaucer never finished it. Many MSS insert at this point the *Tale of Gamelyn*, which is probably not by Chaucer. Possibly its presence in these MSS may be explained by the supposition that Chaucer intended to rewrite the tale, perhaps for assignment to the Knight's Yeoman, and consequently had a copy of it among his papers, which being found there after his death was by some persons supposed to be his composition and therefore placed among his tales. For the name *Gamelyn* cf. *Gamelyn Mot* in *Letter Book H*, pp. 257, 350, 422; and *William Gamelyn* was in the retinue of the earl of Devon in 10 Richard II.

FRAGMENT II (FURNIVALL'S GROUP B^1)

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST (1–98)

1 ff. The remarks of the Host (see especially ll. 17–19, 32) indicate that no tales had been told for some time, perhaps none on this morning. Chaucer here disclaims for the Host, as he does for himself elsewhere, expertness in astronomy; but the two calculations call for more knowledge than the ordinary man possessed. It may be remarked, however, that if the Host had not known it was ten o'clock, his first calculation would not have given him the date; and if he had not known the date, his second calculation would not have given him the hour. He was reasoning in a circle. These elaborate astronomical methods of expressing the date and time were probably imitated from Boccaccio and Dante. Brae, in his edition of Chaucer's treatise on the *Astrolabe*, showed that in the latitude of London, on April 18, the sun would be above a point on the horizon half-way between its rising point and its noon point at 9:20. Half-an-hour and ten minutes more would bring it to ten o'clock. The calculation is, obviously, based not on the path actually traversed by the sun but on its position with reference to the horizon. The artificial day (l. 2) is the period from sunrise to sunset.

5. El, Dd, and related MSS read **eighte and twentithe** or **xxviii**; Hg and many others read **xviijthe**; Ha^4 reads **threttenthe.** Professor Kurt Laves, of our department of Astronomy, has tested these readings by their conformity to ll. 2–3 and 11–14 and finds that **xviijthe** is more accurate by 20 min. than **eighte and twentithe.**

16. **Lordynges** was the common mode of address, equivalent to "Gentlemen" or "Ladies and Gentlemen." In the fifteenth century, the term "Sovereigns" had taken its place; cf. Manly, *Spec. of the Pre-Shakesperean Drama*, I, 316.

20–28. A common theme of ancient poets and philosophers; Skeat refers particularly to Ovid, *Art. Am.* iii, 62–65, Seneca, *Epist.* i, and *RR*, 369ff.

39. **depardieux**, a mild oath. French phrases were too common in Chaucer's England to permit much weight to the suggestion that this is used to characterize the Man of Law.

47. **That**; we should expect **But** here or **Nath** (for **Hath**) in l. 49, but most of the best MSS have the logical inaccuracy of our text. Brusendorff (p. 476) misses the point. What is needed is not **ne that** but **that ne.**

47–76. The allusion of the Man of Law to Chaucer's earlier poems lends verisimilitude to the account of the pilgrimage. Originally, no doubt, the main purpose of ll. 45–96 was, as Lowes suggests, to motivate the telling of a prose tale by the Man of Law. There is good reason to believe that this prose tale was *Mel*, which Chaucer later assigned to himself; cf. Tatlock, 196–97.

The story of Ceys and Alcione is a part of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchesse*. For the other lovers mentioned the Man of Law refers to what he calls the "Legend of Cupid's Saints," which is commonly known as the *Legende of Good Women*.[1] Of the sixteen ladies named in ll. 63–75, eight are actually the subjects of legends in that poem — Tisbe, Dido, Phillis, Adriane, Isiphilee (with Medea) and Ypermistre — though curiously enough the list omits Cleopatra (subject of the first legend), and Philomene (subject of the seventh). Five of the others mentioned — Hero, Eleyne, Ladomea, Penelopee, and Alceste — are celebrated in the ballade incorporated in the *LGW;* Dianire, Hermion, and Brixseyde are not even mentioned in *LGW;* but it is entirely possible that when Chaucer wrote the present passage he intended to compose legends of these eight ladies also — and perhaps others — (cf. *LGW* (F), 554–57). In the F version of the Prologue to *LGW* (written probably in 1386) Alceste imposes this penance upon the poet:

> "Thou shalt while that thou lyvest, yere by yere,
> The moste partye of thy tyme spende
> In makyng of a glorious legende
> Of goode wymmen . . .
> And whan this book is made, yive it the Queene,
> On my byhalfe, at Eltham or at Sheene."

If Chaucer fulfilled this command, he would have produced nine legends — one each year — before the death of the Queen, which occurred June 7, 1394. As there actually are nine, it is reasonable to take the lines of the penance as expressing literally Chaucer's plan and to suppose that he was still engaged in carrying it out when he wrote the lines of the Man of Law. It is possible that

[1] Undoubtedly we ought, as Kittredge (p. 150) suggests, to prefer for this poem the title indicated by Chaucer himself. Note particularly that the heroines of five of the legends are called martyrs.

he was engaged on the unfinished ninth legend when the Queen died. As he knew that *CT* would not soon be completed, he would naturally make the Man of Law refer not only to the legends already in *LGW* but to the others that he intended to write.

77–88. The two repulsive stories here referred to are contained in Gower's *CA*. Why Chaucer mentioned them and what was the effect of this passage upon his friendship with Gower are puzzling questions, which I hope soon to discuss in *MPh*. Gower pronounced **Cana'ce** (rh: **grace, place**), and **Appol'linus** (for *Apollo'nius*). Chaucer may have been chaffing him about this. Certainly there is no basis in Gower for l. 85.

91–93. The Man of Law suggests that it would be as dangerous for him to contend with Chaucer in poetry as it had been for the daughters of Pierus to contend with the Muses. According to Ovid (*Met*, bk. v) they were changed into magpies. Shannon (*MLN*, XXXV, 288–291) shows that in using the form **Metamorphosios** Chaucer was not guilty of ignorance. Most of the MSS of Ovid's poem have the genitive singular, and some of the early editors argued in favor of it. Gower has the astonishing form **Metamor** (*CA*, i, 389).

THE PROLOGE OF THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE

99ff. Lounsbury pointed out (*The Nation*, July 4, 1889) that three stanzas of the prologue and four stanzas of the tale itself are derived from the treatise by Pope Innocent III entitled *De Contemptu Mundi, sive de Miseria Conditionis Humanae*. As the second prologue of *LGW* mentions a translation by Chaucer of "The Wreched Engendring of Mankinde" (l. 414), it has been suggested that parts of it were used here. Skeat speaks of Chaucer's translation as "this juvenile work of his," but it is equally possible that Chaucer used some parts of Pope Innocent's treatise in this tale, and later — perhaps in the nineties — made a complete translation. The abridged translation of the same work by the French poet Eustache Deschamps under the title of "Le Double Lai de Fragilite Humaine" was dedicated to King Charles VI in 1383, but if Chaucer's translation had been made before the first version of the Prologue to *LGW* was written, he would probably have mentioned it there, and if he broke it up and discarded it, it is strange that he mentions it at all.

Chaucer's purpose in writing such a prologue is hard to discover. Tatlock emphasized the inappropriateness of the tale, the clumsiness of the manner in which it is introduced, and the probability that it was not originally written for the Man of Law. He also pointed out that the connection finally effected between the tale and its teller is only mechanical. We can hardly disregard the unanimous testimony of the MSS, though it is permissible to wonder whether, if Chaucer had completed his plan, he would have left this tale to the Man of Law.

The tale is a pious romance of the adventures, sufferings, and final triumph of a Christian heroine over the machinations of her two wicked mothers-in-law and other incidental enemies. The story was very popular in the Middle Ages, as is proved by the existence of more than twenty distinct versions of it. It

forms the subject of one of Gower's tales in *CA* (ii, 587–1598). The immediate source of both Chaucer's version and Gower's was the Anglo-French *Chronicle* of Nicholas Trivet (first half of fourteenth century), which is printed in *Originals and Analogues of Chaucer's CT* (Chaucer Soc.).

113. The wise man is not Solomon, but Jesus, son of Sirach. See *Ecclesiasticus*, xi, 28: "Melius est enim mori quam indigere". *RR*, l. 8178, translates it "Meaux vient mourir que povres estre."

118. In *Prov.* xv, 15, the Vulgate has: "Omnes dies pauperis mali."

124f. **ambes as,** 'double aces,' a losing throw. **sys cynk** (6 + 5 = 11), 'the best chance.' The game known to Chaucer as 'hazard' is now known as 'craps,' from the old name, 'crabs,' of the throw of *ace deuce*.

THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE (134–1162)

144. **message,** 'messenger'; cf. l. 333.

156. **see,** here in the sense of 'protect.'

161. In the margin of several MSS is the gloss: "Europa est tercia pars mundi." Many of the MSS contain marginal glosses in this tale, mainly quotations explaining or illustrating the astrological passages.

171. Cf. note on I, 1913, and § 164.

185. **ceriously,** 'seriatim,' 'in detail.'

190–203. This passage, and the other astrological passages, Skeat regards as later insertions in the tales. But Chaucer's interest in astrology is demonstrably earlier than the date of *CT*.

Curry (pp. 171–91) points out that this tale was organized and developed upon astrological premises.

The idea that events are written in the stars long before they occur was current in Chaucer's time; cf. I, 2031ff. In the margin of El, Hg, Cp, Pw, Ln, and Dd are written, with some errors, four lines of Latin verse from a poem by Bernardus Sylvester entitled *Megacosmus*, or *De Mundi Universitate:*

> Sceptra Phoronei, fratrum discordia Thebae
> Flammae Phætontis, Deucalionis aquae . . .
> In stellis Priami species, audacia Turni,
> Sensus Ulixeus, Herculeusque vigor.

([In the stars were written beforehand] the rule of Phoroneus, the strife of the Theban brothers, Phaeton's fires, Deucalion's flood. . . . In the stars, the beauty of Priam, the boldness of Turnus, the cunning of Ulysses, the strength of Hercules.) The idea is exactly the same, although Hercules and Turnus are the only names common to the two passages. Bernard's poem, forgotten though it now is, was familiar to Chaucer's contemporaries, and is quoted in a treatise on rhetoric which he apparently knew, the *Ars Versificatoria* (iii, 28) of Matthieu de Vendôme; cf. also Everardus Alemannus, *Laborinthus*, ll. 27–33.

224. In Trivet the heathen are called Saracens ("Sarazins") and their temples are spoken of as "les temples de Maumetz." Mediaeval Christians, regarding all heathens as idolaters, supposed that their principal god or prophet was **Mahoun** or Makomete. Chaucer naturally did not trouble himself over the fact that Mahomet was only a child at the time when the events of this story were supposed to have occurred.

273–87. "Perhaps added in revision," says Skeat, but there is no evidence that *MLT* is a revision of an earlier tale.

289. **Or Ilion brende:** 'ere Ilion burned.' The burning of Ilion, the citadel of Troy, is again referred to *LGW*, 936f. By an error most MSS omit *at* before *Thebes*.

295–315. An astrological insertion by Chaucer. Opposite l. 295 several MSS have a Latin quotation from Ptolemy's *Almagest*, explaining ll. 295–98.

Previous editors have taken **firste moevyng** as adjectives modifying **firmament**; but they really form the name of the outermost sphere, called in Latin 'primum mobile'; cf. Introd. p. 134. My punctuation is intended to show that the speaker first addresses the sphere by its name and then calls it **cruel.**

The unfavorable astrological situation, the writer tells us, is due — not to the individual motions of the planets, as Curry seems to suppose — but to the revolution of the **primum mobile**, which has placed the planets in unfavorable positions (therefore **cruel**) in the mundane houses — not in the zodiacal signs, as Curry holds. The situation of the heavenly bodies at the moment of one's birth is important for every event of his life and one should not enter upon any important undertaking without ascertaining whether the planets controlling his fortunes are well situated. In the case of Constance this ought to have been easy to ascertain as the **root**, or horoscope, of her birth must have been known — she being of royal birth.

Atazir (l. 305) is explained by Alcabitius (fo. 22b) as the process of obtaining the celestial distance between the place of any *significator* and any position in the zodiac. This distance upon being translated into time shows when the event indicated will occur; for an example see the commentary of John de Saxonia in the same volume, ed. 1521, fos. 83ff. To the same effect are the words of Haly (*Albohazen Haly Filii Abenragel libri de Iudiciis Astrorum:* Basel, 1551, p. 17, col. 1): "quod fortunae et infortunia non sunt nisi per Athazir. Athazir est significator nativitatis, deferens significationem nati ad quodlibet signum, eundo per signa et domus."

The trouble with Mars, the lord of the ascendant sign *Aries*, seems to be that the movement of the **primum mobile** has "crowded" or thrust him from his angle, probably the ascendant itself, into the darkest of the mundane houses, a cadent (perhaps the 12th house, which adjoined the ascendant), and therefore one where he was helpless. The moon, too, which is of special influence on voyages is said to be not "in reception" with any favorable planet; that is, that none of the planets which have "dignities" where she is situated are situated where she has any "dignity." She is therefore "feeble, and unable to help." For further information see Introd., pp. 139–43.

The plain meaning is that the stars were unfavorable to her going, and that this ought to have been known to the "philosophers."

In the margin of several MSS opposite l. 309 is the gloss:

> Omnes concordati sunt quod elecciones sint debiles nisi in diuitibus; habent enim isti, licet debilitentur eorum elecciones, radicem .i. natiuitates eorum, que confortant omnem planetam debilem in itinere etcetera.

332. **Alkaron,** 'the Koran,' **al** being the Arabic definite article.

358. In the margin of many of the MSS is written the word **auctor** (i.e. author). This is a common method of calling special attention to important sentiments or views. It does not necessarily imply that the author is intruding upon the narrator.

360. According to mediaeval belief, the serpent who tempted Eve had the body of a serpent and the face of a woman. Such a creature often appears in mediaeval art, and allusions to it are frequent. Skeat quotes the alliterative *Troy Book* (EETS), l. 4451:

> Hade a face was fourmet as a fre maydon;

and *PP*, B, xviii, 335 thus:

> Ylyke a lusarde with a lady visage;

and Peter Comestor, *Historia Libri Genesis:* "Elegit etiam quoddam genus serpentis (ut ait Beda) virgineum vultum habens."

401. Lucan does not make a boast of the triumph of Julius, but laments that he had no triumph to record. Shannon, however (*MPh*, XVI, 609–14), quotes three passages which may have led Chaucer to suppose that the triumph was celebrated.

421–27. In the margin of several MSS is quoted a passage from Pope Innocent's *De Contemptu Mundi* of which this stanza is a paraphrase; cf. note on 99ff.

438. **foot hoot,** 'foot hot,' i.e. 'hastily,' a colloquial idiom.

449–62. Not in Trivet. Skeat suggests that it was added in revision.

451. **weleful:** El has **woful.**

470–504. "Not in the French text; perhaps added in revision" (Skeat).

491. See *Revelation*, vii, 1–3, which indicates that the angel spoke only l. 494.

500. St. Mary the Egyptian (5th cy.), after her conversion, retired to the wilderness beyond Jordan and lived the rest of her life with no other food than two and a half — or, as some authorities say, three — loaves of bread; cf. Skeat's note on *PP*, C, xviii, 23.

510. **tyde;** cf. l. 798; in both passages **tyde** may mean 'hour' or more probably 'the flowing of a tide.'

519. According to Trivet, Constance had learned many languages and addressed the constable in his own tongue, the Saxon.

525. **deye**; this word sometimes rhymes with words in **eye** and at other times with words in **ye**. Even in modern English some words — for example, **leisure** — have two pronunciations.

557. **a furlong wey or two**: a measure, not of distance, but of time. A "mile way" is 20 min.; a "furlong way," $2\frac{1}{2}$ min.

578. Skeat notes that King Alla (Aella) figures in the celebrated incident of Pope Gregory and the English slaves, an incident which led to the sending of Christian missionaries to England.

620. **Berth hire on hond**, 'bears her in hand,' i.e. 'accuses her falsely.'

631–58. "Not in the original. A later insertion of much beauty" (Skeat). Ll. 631–32 refer to "trial by combat." A person accused of a crime was allowed to prove his innocence by a formal combat with his accuser. If unable to fight, the accused was allowed to be represented by a champion. For an account of such a combat, see the mediaeval romance *The Erl of Toulous*, or Browning's *Count Gismond*.

638. "Sit on knees" is the usual idiom for 'kneel.'

639. **Susanne.** The story of Susanna, from one of the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, was widely popular in the Middle Ages. On the false testimony of two malicious elders she was condemned to be stoned to death for adultery, but was proved innocent by the skilful cross-questioning of Daniel.

641. **Seint Anne**, the mother of Mary, the mother of Christ.

647. Supply **he** before **gat.**

660. Cf. note on I, 1761.

682. I take **innocent** to be a noun.

703. **What**, 'why.' These lines exemplify the rhetorical figure *dubitatio*, of which Chaucer was rather fond; cf. Manly, *Rhet.*

715. **Knave**: so originally, but altered here and in l. 722 to **man** by El (cf. II, 444, 447 and 612); probably because **knave** was taking on its modern meaning.

736. **lettres**, plural in form, though singular in meaning, like Latin **literae**; cf. l. 747.

748. **direct**, 'addressed.'

762f. These lines hardly seem to belong to the letter, but there is no other way to treat them.

771–77. The passage on drunkenness is not in Trivet, but is derived from Pope Innocent's treatise; cf. note on 99ff. The gloss gives the Latin.

813–19. From Boethius, i, m. 5. Ll. 820–833 are merely hinted at in Trivet, and ll. 834–75 are also additions by Chaucer.

842. **eggement**, 'inciting'; the *g*'s are hard, as in *egg*.

849. El omits **litel.**

876–84. Much abridged from Trivet.

893. **out of drede:** 'without doubt,' 'certainly.'

896. **with meschance;** not an adverb, but an imprecation; cf. l. 914.

925. This stanza and the two following are additions by Chaucer. Ll. 925–31 are based on a passage in Pope Innocent's treatise, which is quoted in the margin of El and other MSS.

939. **Judith.** The story of Judith and Holofernes is told in the Apocryphal book of *Judith.*

961. Trivet gives the name of the senator as Arsemius and his wife's name as Helen. In l. 981 Chaucer calls Helen Constance's aunt. She was really her first cousin.

1009. If this is aimed at Trivet and Gower, Chaucer's memory played him false, they merely say that Constance instructed the child how he should act at the feast.

1035. **sighte,** 'sighed.'

1036. **that he myghte,** 'as fast as he could.'

1037–71. Additions by Chaucer in his characteristic psychologizing manner.

1060. El has **and hise halwes.**

1086ff. Chaucer deliberately rejects the statements of Trivet and Gower on this point, and gives his reason for doing so.

1091. **Sente,** the sentence is so involved that Chaucer has left the construction imperfect, but he obviously means **Sente** to be subj., equivalent to 'as that he should send.' It is not necessary to change it to **sende.**

1126. Certainly not the *Gesta Romanorum.* Whether the tale is contained in the gigantic collection of tales known as the *Faits des Romains* I am unable to say.

1132, 1135. Latin quotations from Pope Innocent's treatise are written in the margin opposite both these lines. The first is paraphrased in ll. 1132–34; the second in ll. 1135–38. These additions, and indeed the remaining lines of the tale, which seem to us inartistic, are in thorough accord with the principles of mediaeval rhetoric.

[THE MAN OF LAW'S END-LINK (II, 1163–90)]

In thirty of the manuscripts *MLT* is followed by a link of twenty-eight lines. In twenty-seven of them the link serves to introduce *SqT*, which immediately follows in the manuscript; but four of the twenty-seven (La, Mc, Py, Ry³) read **sompnour** instead of **squire** in l. 1179. Two other manuscripts, Ry¹ and Ha⁴, have the link with the reading **sompnour;** but in Ry¹ the link is

immediately followed by the Merchant's End-Link, then with no break by the Squire's Head-Link, and then by *SqT;* in Ha⁴ the Link is followed by *WBT*. The only MS containing the order and reading adopted by modern editors is Se. Its order is *MLT*, Link, *SbT*, and the reading in l. 1179 is **shipman.** In Se, however, *MLT* does not come in its usual position, but is moved forward to follow *FklT*. For discussion of the situation see Introd., p. 80.

As this passage does not appear in El or the other MSS of Group I (see Introd., p. 80), I give it here in the Notes instead of including it in the Text, as is usual. I print it from the interesting MS belonging to Lichfield Cathedral; to the Dean and Chapter of which I am indebted for permission to make photostats of the MS.

[THE LICHFIELD MS]

Here endeth the tale of the man of lawe

Here begynneth prologe of the Squier
Owre host vpon his sturpes stood anoon
And seide goode men herkeneth euerychon
This was a thrifty tale for the nones
Sir parissh preest quod he for goddes Bones
Telle vs a tale as was thi forward yore
I se wel that ye lerned men in lore
Konne moche good by goddes dignite
The person hym answerde benedicite
What eyleth the man so synfully to swere
Oure host answerde o Jankyn be ye there
I smelle a loller in the wynd quod he
Now goode men quod oure host herkeneth me
Abideth for goddes digne passion
For we shal haue a predication
This loller here wol prechen vs somwhat
Nay by my fader soule that shal he nat
Seide the Squyer here shal he not preche
He shal no gospel glosen here ne teche
We leeuen alle in the grete god quod he
He wolde sowe som difficulte
Or springen cokkel in oure clene corn
And therfore hoost I warne the biforn
My ioly body shal a tale telle
And I shal clinken with so mery a Belle
That I shal waken al this companie
But it shal be of no philosophie
Ne phislyas ne termes queynte of lawe
Ther is but litel latyn in my mawe

Explicit prologus

The other manuscripts which have the passage, with **squire** or **esquire** in various spellings, are the following: Bw, Cp, En², Fi, Gl, Ha², Ha³, Ht, Ii, La, Ld², Lc, Mm, Ne, Pw, Ra¹, Ra², Ry², Sl¹, Sl², Tc¹, Tc².

Notes of explanation and comment follow:

1165. The words **thrifty tale** seem to echo l. 46 of the Man of Law's words to the Host, and are at least as appropriate to *Mel*, which is thought to have been originally assigned to him, as to the tale of *Constance*, which seems finally to have fallen to his lot. On the other hand, ll. 1188–89 describe *Mel* very well indeed and are entirely unsuited to *Constance*.

1168. The learned men of the party were the Man of Law, the Doctor, the Clerk, and the Parson. Perhaps Chaucer himself should be included in this list, though the Host might not have recognized his claims until after the telling of *Melibeus*. The Monk is represented in the Prologue as scornful of learning, whereas later (II, 3155–72) he seems very bookish.

1170–83. In this episode, whether merely for dramatic effect or not, by at least two of the Pilgrims the Parson is treated as a Wyclifite. Skeat, in a learned note, distinguishes between **lollere**, 'an idle vagabond,' and **lollard**, originally a general term for wandering religious enthusiasts, later specifically applied to the followers of Wyclif. But the meaning here is made perfectly definite by ll. 1179–83, especially l. 1183. A contemporary collection of documents concerning the Wyclifites — the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, or '*Bundles of Cockle*' — begins with an allusion to the well-known parable of the tares, *Matt.*, xiii, 24–30, and quotes a passage from St. Jerome implying that **lollium** was a more familiar word for 'cockle' than **zizanium**. Whether Chaucer conceived his Parson as a Wyclifite, or took Wyclif himself as his model, may admit of discussion, but undoubtedly he represents him as impressing two of the Pilgrims as a puritan and a follower of Wyclif.

1170. **Benedicite,** "bless ye," was formerly a common exclamation. It occurs several times in Chaucer: cf. I, 1785, I, 2115, I, 4583, III, 1456, III, 1584, VII, 1974, and *TC*, i, 780 (where two MSS have the spelling **bendiste**). Usually it is a trisyllable, but in I, 1785 it has its full five syllables. In the Parson's speech — and always, I think, where it is trisyllabic — it is an exclamation to ward off evil. In *FrT* (III, 1456) the summoner uses it when he learns that his traveling companion was not "a yeman," but "a feend"; and the widow uses it (III, 1584) when the summoner knocks and calls violently at her door. In the *Towneley Plays* (Second Shepherd's Play, l. 55) the speaker, meditating on the evil times, exclaims: "Benste and Dominus! what may this be meyne?"; and another (*ib.* l. 358), as he wakes from a bad night, mumbles: "Benste be herein! so my body qwakis!" That **Benedicite** is the first word of the Song of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace — indeed the first word of almost every sentence in the song (see the Thanksgiving after Mass in the Roman Service) — is true but probably has no bearing upon the use of the word as an exclamation.

1172. The Host's query is slang: "Ah, Johnnie, are you there?" **Sir John**

was a common term for a priest. Perhaps it is also worth noting that **John** was commonly a part of the names or pseudonyms of the mysterious leaders of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 — John Ball, John Miller, John Sheep, John Nameless, John Carter, John Trueman, Jack Straw (cf. Knighton, II, 139, Walsingham, II, 33–34) — for some contemporaries thought that John Wyclif was at least in part responsible for that great but short-lived struggle for liberty.

1179. Despite the fact that so many MSS have here the name of the Squire, it seems impossible that Chaucer could have intended him to be the speaker; he would hardly swear by his father's soul, for his father was alive, and the humor of ll. 1181, 1183, in the mouth of some rascal, like the Shipman or the Summoner, is too exquisite to be lost. The whole passage is, indeed, unsuited to the Squire.

1189. **phislyas.** The original MS must have had something that looked either like **phislyas** or like **philleas, filleas,** for these forms, in various spellings, clearly represent the MS tradition. If Chaucer wrote **physik,** as some modern editors and a few late scribes have supposed, it is difficult to see how it could have given rise to the other forms. That no satisfactory explanation of **phislyas** or **philleas** has yet been given proves nothing except that we do not yet know fourteenth century English perfectly. The latest suggestion is that of Goffin (*MLR*, XVIII, 335f.). He thinks the original reading was **filas** (Anglo-Fr. **filaz,** 'files or cases'). He refers to *OED*, s.v. **filace.** At first I rejected this — rather superciliously, I fear. I am now convinced that it offers the key to the enigma. The speaker, whoever he is, seems to be one of the ruder members of the party. To represent him as making an unsuccessful attempt to use a technical term would be entirely in Chaucer's manner. The best example of this is his consistent representation of the Host as fond of using words that he does not understand and consequently disfigures in some way. Note, as illustrations of this tendency, "By corpus dominus" (VII, 3120), "By corpus bones (VI, 314), "By Seint Ronyan" (VI, 310), "By that precious corpus Madrian (VII, 3082), "jurdones," "Galiones" (VI, 305, 306), and "cardynacle" (VI, 313). His error in one case is emphasized by his obvious delight in his creation —

> And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!
> Seyde I nat wel? I kan nat speke in terme —

and by the humorous twist given to the name of this new-found saint by the Pardoner —

> 'It shal be doon,' quod he, 'by Seint Ronyon'!

In the present passage the speaker was apparently trying to use a term familiar to the Man of Law. What he meant to say was **filas** (or **filace**); what he said may be represented as **fileas,** or **phillias. Physlyas** arose from some scribe's mistaking the first **l** of **phillias** (or **phyllyas,** or the like) for a long **s.**

The quotations in *OED* under **filace** show that it, in various spellings — among them **filas** — was a technical term in the higher courts of law for centuries. There was in each of these courts (except that of the Exchequer) an

officer called a **filacer,** who filed original writs and issued processes thereon. The **filas** of a case in the Common Pleas was very necessary for the successful prosecution of the case. There was even a derivative, **filacery** (*OED*). The term, then, was in common use in England in Chaucer's day; but, being a technical term, was not entirely familiar to the rude interrupter of the Host's invitation to the Parson.

[FRAGMENT III (FURNIVALL'S GROUP D)]

PROLOGE OF THE WYVES TALE OF BATH (III, 1–856)

The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale are not linked to any preceding tale. They form the first section of a group including also the tales of the Friar and the Summoner, which are closely linked together by conversation and narrative.

The Wife of Bath's Prologue is an account of her own experiences of married life, and is in the main highly dramatic and entirely in character. If at times her revelations are more intimate than would seem natural even under the conditions of the Canterbury journey, we may account for this by remembering that self-revelations or confessions were a conventional device of mediaeval literature. Just as the Elizabethan dramatists made use of the conventional device of the soliloquy to convey information or make revelations which could not easily be dealt with otherwise, the mediaeval satirists used the conventional device of the confession to bring out experiences and traits of character which under ordinary circumstances the person making the confession would never think of revealing.

The Wife's revelation of her acts, motives, and character belongs to the general stream of mediaeval satire on women, and includes all the most striking features of that satire. In writing it Chaucer draws heavily upon preceding satires, each of which is more or less based upon those that had gone before. The earliest with which we are concerned, and the basis of all that followed, is the treatise of St. Jerome *Against Jovinian* (*Adversus Jovinianum*). The Latin text of this was known to Chaucer and to some at least of the circle of readers for which he wrote, for the margins of several MSS contain many quotations from this treatise. Included in St. Jerome's treatise was a translation into Latin of a part of what he calls the *Golden Book on Marriage* of Theophrastus, the friend of Aristotle. Of the twelfth century is the epistle written by Walter Map to one of his friends, entitled *Valerius ad Rufinum, de non ducenda uxore.* Next in order of time is Jean de Meun's satire in *RR,* which is itself largely based upon St. Jerome. Of equal importance is the contemporary poem by Eustache Deschamps entitled *Le Miroir de Mariage.* Whether Chaucer knew the even bitterer and more extensive satire entitled in Latin *Lamentationes Matheoluli* or the French version of it by Jehan le Fevre entitled *Les Lamentations de Matheolus* is not known, as no one appears yet to have investigated the subject. For the indebtedness to St. Jerome, see especially

Woolcombe in *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Soc.), pp. 297–304; Lounsbury, II, 292–95; Koeppel in *Archiv*, LXXXIV, 413–15, and in *Anglia*, XIII, 174–83. For the indebtedness to *RR* see especially Mead in *PMLA*, XVI, 388ff. and Fansler, *Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose*. For numerous examples of the indebtedness to the *Miroir de Mariage* see Lowes in *MPh*, III, 305–22. I add a few references to *Les Lamentations*.

Numerous glosses appear in the margins of El and other MSS in this prologue. They are passages — mainly from St. Jerome and the Bible — which were certainly in Chaucer's mind when he wrote. Whether their presence in the MSS is due to him or to some early commentator is not yet decided.

1. Mediaeval scholars recognized two types of argument, that from authority — that is, the written opinions of reputable authors — and that from experience. The Wife of Bath has learned the jargon of the schools from her fifth husband, who was a clerk. In *RR* the Old Woman, *la veille*, who is one of the sources of Chaucer's satire, says in like manner that her knowledge of love is derived, not from schools, but from experience:

> N'onc ne fui d'Amours a escole
> Ou l'en leüst la theorique,
> Mais je sai tout par la pratique:
> Esperiment m'en ont fait sage,
> Que j'ai hantez tout mon aage.
> — (12,802–06).

4. According to canon law, twelve was the legal age for the marriage of girls.

7. All the printed MSS with the exception of El and Ha^4 read (with insignificant variations of spelling):

> If I so ofte myghte han wedded be.

El and Ha^4 change **if** to **for**, and El omits **myghte**. It is obvious that the scribes thought they were correcting an error, and modern editors have agreed with the scribes; but they have all failed to understand the Wife's meaning. She knows well enough that she has gone through the marriage ceremony with five men, but she does not know whether they were really her husbands. The question is one that was raised by Jerome (I, 14, 15), where he is discussing how many times a woman may marry, and expresses the view that "where there are more husbands than one, the proper idea of a husband, who is a single person, is destroyed" and goes on to say that "if there is more than one husband it makes no difference whether he be a second or a third, because there is no longer a question of single marriage." In the course of the argument Jerome cites the example of the Samaritan woman in the same way in which it is cited by the Wife of Bath (ll. 14–25): "At all events this is so if the Samaritan woman in John's Gospel who said she had her sixth husband was reproved by the Lord because he was not her husband." The Wife's doubt therefore was merely whether her five marriages were valid, and her whole argument through l. 25 is on this point. The argument from Christ's having attended only one wedding (ll. 10–13) is represented as being, not

only that one should not marry more than once, but that only one marriage is valid. The reading of El makes sense in l. 7, but obscures the argument of the passage as a whole.

11. In the margin is the gloss: "In Cana Galilee."

12. El reads: "by the same ensample thoughte me." The reading given in the text is that of most of the other MSS and is required by the context. In the margin of several MSS is the gloss (from Jerome; cf. *John*, ii, 1–11):

Qui enim semel iuit ad nupcias docuit semel esse nubendum.

14. **Io**, omitted in El, Ha^4, and Sl^1.

18. El reads: "and that man the which that hath now thee." The reading adopted is that of most of the other MSS.

23. In the margin of several MSS is the gloss:

Non est vxorum numerus diffinitus; quia secundum Paulum, Qui habent vxores sic sint tanquam non habentes.

28. Some MSS have the gloss:

Crescite & multiplicamini.

This and the other Biblical allusions are taken directly from St. Jerome.

29. El omits **wel**.

33. From Jerome (i, 15): "I do not condemn bigamy, nay nor trigamy; nor, if I may use the expression, octogamy." Both St. Jerome and the Wife of Bath are discussing successive marriages. According to the canonists, bigamy might consist in marrying a widow or a woman of loose morals as well as in marrying two women at the same time or in succession; cf. Gy, *Adam de le Hale*, pp. 412ff. and *Matheolus*, II, pp. cxiiff. and 145f.)

44. Between this line and the next, thirteen MSS (Ch, Cn, Cx^2, Dd, Ds, En^1, Hl, Ma^1, Ne, Ry^1, Se, Si, Tc^2) insert six lines. Tatlock agrees with Skeat and Tyrwhitt in regarding them as genuine:

Of whiche I have ypiked out the beste,
Bothe of hir nether purs and of hir cheste.
Diverse scoles maken parfit clerkes;
Divers praktyk in many sondry werkes
Maketh the werkman parfit sekirly;
Of fyve housbondes scolering am I.

Not only the general argument but the special figure comes from Jerome.

46. Some MSS have the gloss: "Si autem non continent nubant." Cf. 1 *Cor.* vii, 9. Most of the Biblical allusions are from this chapter, but through St. Jerome.

48ff. In the margin of some MSS are glosses, mainly from St. Jerome.

49. El omits **that** here; **holy** in l. 58; and **any** in l. 59.

54. The allusions to Lamech and other Old Testament worthies come from Jerome.

73. In some MSS is the gloss:

Paulus de virginibus: preceptum non habeo, consilium autem do, etcetera.

75. The gloss is: Inuitat ad cursum, tenet in manu virginitatis brauium; qui potest capere capiat, etcetera.

81. Some MSS give the Latin:

Volo autem omnes homines esse sicut me ipsum.

85. El omits **that:** and in l. 91 has **that** for **he heeld.**

96. **preferre,** 'take precedence of.' An uncommon use of the word.

99ff. The argument and figure are again from Jerome.

103ff. Some MSS have the marginal glosses:

Vnusquisque proprium habet donum ex deo; alius quidem sic, alius autem sic.

Qui cantant sequentur Agnum xliiij^{or} Millia (cf. *Rev.* xiv, 1–4).

160ff. Glosses, from 1 *Cor.* vii, occur.

163ff. Whether the Pardoner was in clerical orders it is difficult to determine. The church permitted the marriage of the lower clergy. The third Lateran Council (1179), which was a general council, says expressly: "It is permitted any subdeacon to marry" (permittitur subdiacono cuidam contrahere matrimonium). Those who took advantage of the permission laid aside the ecclesiastical costume and renounced the tonsure and took a part in secular affairs, but they still retained the privilege of "benefit of clergy." But G. R. Owst, in the latest and best book on the subject, says that many of the preaching pardoners were laymen (*Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 104; cf. pp. 96–110).

167. **What:** 'why.'

168. **to yeere,** 'this year,' like **today.**

170. **another tonne.** The two tuns of sweet drink and bitter which Jupiter keeps before his door for all mankind are described at length in *RR;* cf. Ellis's translation, ll. 7191–7224. Skeat points out that Gower also alludes to them.

172. El omits **the;** and in l. 177 has **that** for **thilke.**

180–82. In the margin of MS Dd is written

Qui per alios non corigitur
Alii per ipsum corigentur.

Chaucer's ascription of this saying and that quoted in ll. 326–27 to Ptolemy has puzzled his editors, because they were unable to find them in any of Ptolemy's writings. Flügel furnished the explanation in *Anglia*, XVIII, 133–40. The Venice edition (1515) of Gerard of Cremona's Latin version of the *Almagest*

contains at the beginning a brief life of Ptolemy, followed by a collection of thirty-three apophthegms ascribed to him. Of these No. 18 reads: "Qui per alios non corrigitur: nec alii per ipsum corrigentur." This is obviously the source of the gloss on ll. 180–82. No. 23 is: "Inter homines altior existit mundo: qui non curat in cuius manu sit mundus" (cf. note on ll. 324–27). In *Anglia*, XXI, 222–30, F. Boll discussed the sources and history of these additions to the *Almagest*.

All the published MSS except Pw and La distort the name of Ptolemy to Protholomee. The distortion may therefore have occurred in the MS from which all the extant ones are derived, but the distorted form does not suit the metre. **Pro** is written in MSS of this time by **P** with a curved stroke through the stem. The distortion probably originated as a scribal error.

191. **of** is not in El.

193ff. In some MSS occurs the following comment:

> Bihoold how this goode wyf serued hir .iij. firste housbondes whiche were goode olde men.

197. El has **the thre men were goode and.**

215. El **werk.**

218ff. The reference is to the flitch of bacon which could be claimed by any pair who, after a year of marriage, could make oath that they had never had a quarrel, never regretted their marriage, and if free would again marry one another; cf. Chambers' *Book of Days*, I, 749, where we are told that the flitch was claimed in 1445, 1467, 1701, 1751, and 1763. Skeat in his note on *PP*, C, xi, 276 adds that it was claimed in 1772, 1851, 1855, and 1876.

221. This is one of the passages Lowes regards as due to the *Miroir de Mariage;* Skeat had referred it to the *Aureolus Liber de Nuptiis*, written by a certain Theophrastus, who is mentioned in l. 671 and in IV, 1310. The work is known only from the long extract quoted in the treatise of Jovinian (bk. 1, chap. 47).

228. El has **as kan a womman.**

232. 'Make him believe that the chough is crazy.' **Cow** is a common spelling of **chough** (a kind of jackdaw); see *OED*, s.v., **chough.** Perhaps the first element of **cow-blackbird** is the same word. The story alluded to is that a jealous husband sets a talking bird to report on the faithfulness of his wife. When the bird reports her misconduct, the wife by a trick persuades the husband that the bird is crazy, and he kills it. It is the story of the husband and the parrot in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, and Clouston printed several versions of it to illustrate Chaucer's *Mc T* in the Chaucer Society *Originals and Analogues*, pp. 437ff. and 545f.

235. Cf. *Matheolus*, ii, 1452ff.

257. El has **seyst that** here; and repeats **som for** in l. 260.

259. El **kan synge and.**

269. El omits **ther.**

278–80. Proverbial. From Pope Innocent's *De Contemptu Mundi:* "There are three things which do not permit a man to stay in his house: smoke, dropping water, and a bad wife." Guillaume de Normandie, a 13th cy. poet, wrote a whole poem — *Les Treis Moz* — on the subject for an English bishop; cf. *ZsfrPh*, III, 225ff.

280. **hous.** The MSS are about equally divided between **hous** and **houses.** The evidence seems to indicate that the original had **hous,** which was changed to the plural by some scribes on account of the plural pronoun. For the word **benedicitee** cf. note on II, 1170.

282. El **that we.** On the subject matter, cf. *Matheolus*, i, 642–632.

285. **hors.** An old uninflected plural. On trial marriages; cf. *Matheolus*, ii, 430ff. and iii, 265–94.

303. The whole passage, ll. 265–302, is largely based upon the extract from Theophrastus in St. Jerome.

308. El omits **this.**

311. **Oure dame:** herself; cf. l. 713.

319. El omits **nat.**

320. **dame Alys.** It is a little curious that Chaucer gives the same name to both the Wife of Bath and her "gossip"; cf. ll. 530, 548, and 804.

323. El has **blessed.**

324. Cf. note on l. 182f. The Latin is given in the margin of the MS.

342. 1 *Tim.* ii, 9, is quoted in the margin.

350. **his,** 'its'; the sex of the cat is indicated in ll. 352ff. **in,** not 'tavern,' but merely 'dwelling.' The saying was common; cf. *Matheolus*, ii, 307 1ff., and *Miroir*, ll. 3214f.

354. **caterwawed,** 'a-caterwauling.' Skeat showed that the **ed** is not the participial ending, but represents an old English ending **að** forming abstract nouns, like **huntað,** 'hunting.' Cf. the note on VI, 406.

358. The hundred-eyed Argus was set by Juno to keep watch over Io, who had been changed into a cow; cf. note on I, 1385ff.

361. **make his berd;** slang, 'put something over on him.' **so moot I thee;** a mild oath, 'so may I thrive.'

362. In some MSS is a gloss (from Jerome):

eciam odiosa vxor si habeat virum bonum, etcetera.

371ff. In the margin of some MSS occur glosses (from Jerome):

Amor illius inferno et arenti terre et incendio comparata. Vnde illud, etcetera. Infernus et amor mulieris et terra que non saciatur aqua et ignis non dicent satis, etcetera. Sicut in ligno vermis ita perdet virum suum

vxor. Nemo melius scire potest quid sit vxor vel mulier nisi ille qui passus est.

373. **wilde fyr**; wild fire seems to have been distinguished from Greek fire, but both were preparations of naphtha or other inflammable substances that could not be quenched by water. Colonel Hime concluded that Greek fire was distinguished by the presence of quicklime; cf. **Greek fire** in *Encycl. Brit.*

401. A translation of a mediaeval proverb which is quoted in the margin of some MSS: "Fallere, flere, nere, dedit Deus in muliere."

415. Cf. I, 4134 and *RR*, 7518–20.

432. **Wilkyn**, a diminutive like **Janekyn** and **Malkyn**; here of course used humorously.

460. This anecdote comes from Valerius Maximus; cf. note on l. 642. In some MSS occurs the gloss:

Valerius, libro 6°, capitulo 3°. Metellius vxorem suam eo quod vinum bibisset fuste percussam interemit.

484. **croce**, 'a staff'; cf. **croche** in *OED.* **St. Joce**, a Breton saint. His hermitage near Amiens became a famous monastery, and must have become familiar to Englishmen in the course of the French wars, but Skeat thinks Chaucer remembered a passage in *Le Testament de Jean de Meun*, ll. 461–64, which suggested both the idea and the rhyme of this couplet.

489. In *Matheolus*, iii, 1673–1720, God, in reply to the reproaches and arguments of Mahieu, tells him that he has established several purgatories, the most painful of which is marriage, and that anyone who has endured that is relieved from the others. Later — in his dream — Mahieu is received into heaven by a chorus of "bigamists," who cry:

Welcome, welcome, true martyr!
Come and join our dance.

492f. Jerome (i, 48): "We read of a certain Roman noble who, when his friends found fault with him for having divorced a wife beautiful, chaste, and rich, put out his foot and said to them, 'And the shoe before you looks new and elegant, yet no one but myself knows where it pinches.'"

496. "Across the arch which usually divides the chancel from the nave in English churches was stretched a beam on which was placed a rood, i.e. a figure of Our Lord on the cross" (Bell).

498f. Chaucer's knowledge of the tomb of Darius seems to have been derived from Gualtier de Chatillon's *Alexandreis, sive Gesta Alexandri Magni.* Lounsbury (II, 354) summarizes the description of the magnificent tomb, a lofty pyramid of white marble, overlaid with gold.

517. **Wayte what**, not exclamatory, but an indefinite relative, 'whatever'; cf. Derocquigny's note, *MLR*, III, 72 and Cook's note on **look what**, *MLN*, XXXI, 442. Both constructions have been commonly misunderstood.

521. **With daunger**, 'grudgingly,' to enhance the price.

552. An Ovidian expression that had become proverbial.

556ff. She enumerates the principal occasions which brought people together in the Middle Ages. Cf. Mahieu's account of the use women made of all such assemblies, *Matheolus*, i, ll. 947–1022. See also *RR*, 13,517–28.

571. **nof,** a contraction of "ne of."

572f. Proverbial in many languages; cf. G. Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, 67: "The mouse that hath but one hole is quickly taken." Chaucer may have read it in *RR* (13,150ff.) or in the rhetorical treatise of Mathieu de Vendôme; cf. Manly, *Rhet.*, p. 12.

576. **My dame.** Curry (p. 94) thinks this refers to "the love star, Venus." But the satirists commonly represent the tricks of women as traditional lore, passed on by older women; cf. *Matheolus*, ii, 1807–1992, or Lowes, *MPh*, III, 316f.

577. **mette,** 'dreamed'; the verb is used both impersonally and personally.

602. The Reeve also claimed to have a trace of youth; cf. I, 3888.

604. **Seinte Venus seel:** a "birth mark"; cf. Barnouw, *The Nation*, CIII, 504, and Curry, pp. 104–07.

609–16. In the margin opposite these lines El has Latin glosses, of which these lines are a paraphrase. The first is from a collection of astrological maxims known as the Aphorisms of Almansor; the other from a similar collection, ascribed to the mysterious Hermes Trismegistus.

The more significant of the glosses is the second: "In the nativities of women, if either of the houses of Venus is in the ascendant and Mars in it (or vice versa) the woman will be unchaste." The Wife of Bath says that when she was born the ascendant was Taurus, the night house of Venus, and that Mars was situated in it. This "constellation" or disposition of the stars controlled her temperament and character. Curry (ch. v) argues that Chaucer built up the character of the Wife of Bath entirely from her horoscope.

642ff. **Romayn geestes** is, to be sure, a literal translation of *Gesta Romanorum*, but it does not appear that Chaucer ever uses the term in that sense. The two stories referred to come from the *Dictorum Factorumque Memorabilium Exempla* of Valerius Maximus, a Latin collector of historical anecdotes, whose book was much read in mediaeval schools and was often quoted by Chaucer.

651. **Ecclesiaste,** not *Ecclesiastes*, but the Apocryphal *Ecclesiasticus*, xxv, 25.

655. "This is clearly a quotation of some old saying, as shewn by the metre, which here varies, and becomes irregular. There is a slightly different version of it in Wright's *Reliquiae Antiquae*, i. 233:

> 'Who that byldeth his howse all of salos,
> And prikketh a blynde horsse over the falowes,
> And suffereth his wif to seke many halos,
> God sende hym the blisse of everlasting galos!'" — Skeat.

659. **I sette noght an hawe of,** slang, 'I don't care a penny for."

660. **sawe:** El has **awe;** Hg, Ha^4, and Gg **sawe;** the other MSS **lawe.** Long **s** and **l** are so much alike in the MSS that we need not hesitate to read **sawe,** as the context requires.

668. **deef,** cf. I, 446. **Deaf** was still pronounced to rhyme with **leaf** by many old persons a generation ago. The pronunciation with a short vowel is a modern development.

669ff. The Wife of Bath was fairly familiar with the contents of her husband's book. According to her description, it was a volume in which he had collected the most famous ancient and mediaeval satires on women. A MS volume in the library of Sir Henry Savile in the 16th century contained three of these books (cf. *Trans. Bibliog. Soc.*, IX, 188, No. 152). The **Valerie** mentioned is the *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, by Walter Map. For **Theofraste,** see note on l. 221. Material from the book is used also in ll. 235, 257, 271, 282, 285, 293, 303. St. Jerome's treatise *Adversus Jovinianum* has already been discussed. Tertullian (**Tertulan,** l. 676) was perhaps represented by one or more of the treatises *De Exhortatione Castitatis*, *De Monogamia*, and *De Pudicitia*. **Crisippus** is not known as an author. Chaucer probably found his name in the treatise of Jerome. **Trotula** was a famous woman, associated with the great medical school of Salerno. For a discussion of her and her name (cf. *Dame Trot*) see Hamilton in *MPh*, IV, 377ff. The love letters of Eloisa (**Helowys**) to Abelard were famous in both mediaeval and modern times. She gives many reasons for refusing to marry Abelard. Ovid's *De Arte Amandi* was the source of much mediaeval writing about love.

692–96. The Aesopic fable of the sculptor and the lion is well known. In the *Spectator* No. 11, Steele tells it of a painter and a lion, and represents the lion as saying: "We lions are none of us painters, else we could show you a hundred men killed by lions for one lion killed by man."

696. **the mark of Adam;** all in his likeness; cf. V, 880.

697–705. The children of Mercury and Venus are those born under the domination of these planets. The characteristics of Mercury and Venus are opposite (ll. 691–700), and therefore, according to astrology, each has its **casus,** or **fall,** in the sign in which the other has its **exaltation.** Thus Virgo is the fall of Venus and the exaltation of Mercury; and Pisces is the fall of Mercury and the exaltation of Venus. A planet in its fall indicates misfortune. In its exaltation it has special power.

In the margin are two glosses from Almansor, explaining **fall** and **exaltation,** and giving the attributes of Venus and Mercury.

713. **sire.** **Sire** and **dame** (l. 311) were sometimes used colloquially in early English for the husband and wife, as **papa** and **mamma** are today in some classes of society.

737. The distortion of **Clytemnestra** recalls the similar distortion of **Hypermnestra** into **Ypermystra** in II, 75. Such odd spellings were not uncommon in

the Middle Ages. Even Boccaccio's learned *De Genealogia Deorum* has **Hypermestra.**

741. **Amphiorax,** 'Amphiaraus'; Chaucer apparently pronounced the name as if spelled Amphioras, **x** representing an s sound in a number of words taken over in French spelling, as **Ceyx** (for **Ceys**), **Brixseyde.** All the classical allusions here are taken over from Jerome *Against Jovinian*, but Chaucer had also read the story of Eriphyle's betrayal of her husband Amphiaraus for a golden necklace in the *Thebaid* of Statius, though he follows Jerome in calling it a brooch (**ouche, monile**).

747. **Lyvia.** Editors print **Lyma;** but **ui, ni, iu, in, m** are usually indistinguishable in the MSS; cf. Jenkinson, *The Later Court Hands in England*, p. 36. Chaucer's source may have been *Valerie* (l. 671), but he seems to have had fuller information than is given there. Skeat points out that the stories of Livia and Lucia are retold by Ben Jonson, *Sejanus*, act II, sc. 1, and Tennyson, *Lucretius*.

757. This story was told in ancient and mediaeval times of many persons, but no version of it is known which mentions Latumyus. The earliest appearance of it is in Cicero's *De Oratore*, but Chaucer is more likely to have got it from some mediaeval source — probably from Walter Map's *Valerius*.

775. From *Ecclesiasticus*, xxv, 16: "I had rather dwell with a lion and a dragon than to keep house with a wicked woman"; cf. *Proverbs*, xxi, 19.

778ff. Cf. *Proverbs*, xxi, 9, 10.

782f. From Jerome, who correctly ascribes it to Herodotus.

784. Cf. *Proverbs*, xi, 22.

847. **Sidyngborne,** 'Sittingbourne'; about forty miles from London, and ten miles beyond Rochester, which is mentioned in VII, 3116.

THE WYVES TALE OF BATHE (857–1264)

The Tale of the Wife of Bath illustrates the woman's desire for domination, or sovereignty, which was the basis of her conflicts with her husbands. According to Kittredge, this is the first of a group of tales organized by Chaucer into a definite discussion of the problem whether in marriage the husband or the wife should rule. The Wife of Bath maintains that wives should rule their husbands. The Clerk of Oxenford replies with a story in favor of the submission of wives. The theme is continued by the Merchant, and after an interval of relief furnished by *SqT*, which deals, not with marriage, but with love, is brought to a conclusion by the Franklin, whose tale illustrates the view that happiness in marriage depends upon love and **gentilesse** on both sides; cf. especially V, 764–78, 791–98, 803–05. Kittredge's theory has awakened the liveliest interest. The chief contributions to the discussion are: Kittredge, "Chaucer's discussion of Marriage," *MPh*, IX, 457ff.; Lawrence, "The Marriage Group in the *Canterbury Tales*," *MPh*, XI, 247ff.; Tupper, "The

Quarrels of the Canterbury Pilgrims" *JEGP*, XIV, 256ff.; Kenyon, "Further Notes on the Marriage Group," *JEGP*, XV, 282ff.; Hinckley, "The Debate on Marriage," *PMLA*, XXXII, 292ff.

WBT was a favorite tale, and has been often told. For a full discussion of the sources and all versions of it see especially G. H. Maynadier, *The Wife of Bath's Tale: Its Sources and Analogues*, London, 1901.

868. The number of friars in England in the fourteenth century was a subject of common complaint by the satirists, who speak of them as "many thousand" and "without number."

876. Persons in religious orders were as a rule obliged to recite the divine office in the church, but secular priests and friars, both of whom were expected to spend much of their time among the people, were allowed to recite the service as they walked.

880. **incubus**; according to mediaeval superstition an incubus was an evil spirit who assaulted women as they slept. A similar spirit supposed to assault men was called **succubus.** Of such intercourse demon children were supposed to be born.

881. Of fifty-two MSS that have this line, thirty-two — representing all lines of descent — have **but dishonour**; Ha^4 has **but doon hem dishonour**; Ra^2 has **but honour.** Thirteen MSS — Ad^1, Bo^1, Ds, En^1, En^3, He, Ma^1, Nl, Si, Tc^1, Gl, Ra^3, and Ps — have **no dishonour**; Cn and Gg have **none** (or **non**) **d.** The closely related Cx^1, Cx^2, Tc^2 have **ne . . . ony d.** Chaucer's ironical humor is said to favor the reading **non** or **no.** Several scholars have defended the reading **but,** which is best supported by MS authority. Brusendorff's argument (pp. 475f.) that **ne . . . but** means the same as **ne . . . non** seems unsound. It seems possible, however, to retain the MS reading if one supposes a decided rhetorical pause before **but.**

884. **ryver,** not 'river,' but 'riviere,' that is, 'hawking for waterfowl.' Cf. note on VII, 1927.

885. **he**; so El, Dd, Hg and nineteen other MSS. Most editors adopt **she,** the reading of thirty-two other MSS. But it seems more necessary to say that **he** was alone than that **she** was.

887. **maugree hir heed,** 'in spite of her head,' that is, 'despite all she could do,' a colloquial idiom.

940f. The context seems decisive in favor of interpreting this to mean 'if any one scratches us on a sore place, we will kick,' because he tells us the unpleasant truth.

949. **rake-stele,** 'rake handle'; **stele** is from OE **stela** meaning 'a stick,' and is not the same word as **steel** from OE **style.**

952. Ovid's version of the Midas story is not quite as Chaucer gives it; see *Met*, xi, 174–93. He attributes the betrayal of the secret to Midas's barber, not to his wife.

1021. **pistel,** 'epistle,' here used loosely for a brief communication.

1109–76. Such views on **gentilesse** were fairly common. They may be found in Boethius, Jehan de Meun, Dante, Gower, and numerous other writers. On the whole matter cf. Lowes "Chaucer and Dante's *Convivio*," *MPh*, XIII, 19–33. On gentility, the equality of men, etc., cf. also J. Falk "La Democratie dans l'Epopée française," in *Mélanges de Phil. Romane dediés a Carl Wahlund.*

1113. **Looke who;** not exclamatory but an indefinite relative, 'whoever'; cf. Cook, *MLN*, XXXI, 442, and note on III, 551.

1126. **sentence:** 'thought,' 'theme.'

1142. **lye,** 'blaze.'

1159f. Brusendorff's idea (p. 475) that these lines run contrary to the context, and require **but** to be taken in the sense of **noon** rests on a failure to follow the course of the thought. Chaucer is contrasting the conventional, false idea of **gentillesse** with the true.

1168. During a great part of the Middle Ages the prose works of the Roman philosopher Seneca were not easily accessible. Roger Bacon tells us that he had tried for twenty years before he succeeded in obtaining a copy of Seneca. Nevertheless Seneca was freely quoted at secondhand, and there were several treatises not of his authorship which went under his name. On the general subject cf. Harry Morgan Ayres, "Chaucer and Seneca," *Rom Rev*, X, 1–15.

1179. **wilful poverte,** 'voluntary poverty.' From the middle of the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth the question whether true followers of Christ ought to renounce worldly possessions and live in voluntary poverty was constantly under discussion. St. Francis had founded the Franciscan Order on this principle, but the next minister general, Brother Elias, relaxed the rule and a long controversy arose which ended in the division of the Franciscans into two great branches, the Conventuals following a mitigated rule and the Observantines maintaining the original rigor of the Order. In fourteenth century England the controversy was continued by the reformers Richard Fitzralph and Wyclif and by *PP*.

1183. A translation of the Senecan sentence: "Honesta res est laeta paupertas." The ideas in ll. 1184–90 are from the same source.

1191. **it syngeth;** most of the MSS curiously distort this line. Most of them have "verray poverte is synne proprely." Dd has the same words in a different order. El and Gg have the correct reading, which is that adopted in the text.

1192. Juvenal's line:

Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator

was proverbial in the Middle Ages. Wyclif (*Works*, ed. Arnold, II, 364) says "For it is said comounly, that a wey-goer, whan he is voide, singith sure bi the theef."

1195ff. The passage is based upon sayings attributed to an unknown philosopher called Secundus, the Latin original of which is quoted in the margin of the MS: "Secundus philosophus: Paupertas est odibile bonum, sanitatis mater, curarum remocio, sapientie reparatrix, possessio sine calumpnia"; cf. note on VII, 4353f. These sayings were very popular in the Middle Ages. They first appear in a fabulous report of a dialogue between the emperor Adrian and the philosopher (Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, x, 71).

1203. Spectacles were not uncommon after the 13th century. The reference here is not to a perspective glass for distant vision; Roger Bacon's declaration that lenses could be arranged so as to enable one to see things at great distances is interesting, but does not bear upon this passage.

THE PROLOGE OF THE FRERES TALE (1265–98)

The quarrel between the Summoner and the Friar which broke out during the course of the *WBT* appears to have been one of long standing. They seem both to have come from the North Country, specifically from that part of Yorkshire called Holderness. The principal town of the district was Beverley, where there was a convent of Franciscan friars, who at this time were engaged in collecting money for making repairs, as the Friar is represented as doing in *SmT*. For the jurisdictional quarrel which at this time attracted special attention to Beverley, and for the general background of the tales of the Friar and Summoner, see Manly, *New Light*, pp. 102–22 and Kuhl, *MPh*, XI, 335ff.

1267. **honestee**; not 'honesty,' but 'good manners,' 'decorum.'

1272. **scole matere**: obviously a jest. The subject of *WBT* was not one commonly discussed in schools, though there of course had been much ecclesiastical discussion of celibacy and marriage, singular or plural.

1276. **auctoritees.** As Skeat points out, this is a direct reference to l. 1208 above, and perhaps also to l. 1; see also the note on l. 44.

1295–96. Nearly all the MSS have these lines at this place. Recent editors have followed Ha^4 in placing them between ll. 1308 and 1309; but they break the connection there, whereas they fit here without difficulty.

THE FRERES TALE (1299–1664)

1301. **my contree,** Holderness; cf. note on ll. 1265–98 and Introd. pp. 70–74.

1302. **erchedekene,** an archdeacon was an administrative and disciplinary officer of a diocese or a district of a large diocese. To his court were summoned all ecclesiastics who were accused of crimes and all laymen who were accused of violations of ecclesiastical law. In ll. 1304–16 the Friar gives a pretty comprehensive list of the offences of which the archdeacon's court took notice.

1308–09. See note on ll. 1295–96.

1311. **syngen:** slang; cf. l. 1316.

1313. **persone:** 'parson.'

1314. "No fine could save the accused from punishment" (Skeat). But it seems rather to mean: 'no money penalty, however small, could escape the archdeacon.'

1317. Cf. *PP*, C, xi, 92:

> Dobest bere sholde the bisshopes croce,
> And halye with the hoked ende ille men to goode,
> And with the pyk putte adoune *preuaricatores legis*.

1322. **A slyer boye,** colloquial.

1323. **espiaille,** a collective noun meaning 'a body of spies,' as **poraille** (I, 247) means 'the poor' collectively.

1325–26. The use of 'stool-pigeons' is ancient.

1329–30. Friars were not subject to the jurisdiction of the bishops, but only to that of the general of the order and the pope.

1332. **Peter!,** a common exclamation; cf. especially VIII, 665. **styves.** 'The stews' derived their name from French **estuve,** 'a hot bath'; though they were throughout the Middle Ages associated with houses of assignation and ill fame, they were not under ecclesiastical jurisdiction but directly under royal control.

1334. Cf. note on II, 896.

1343. **approwours,** 'agents,' 'men who looked after his profits,' from OF **prou,** *n.* 'profit.'

1347. **Cristes curs,** 'excommunication'; cf. I, 655ff.

1349. **atte nale,** ME **at then ale,** OE æt þǣm ale. The **n** has been transferred, as in the vulgar **a napple** for *an apple*. The reverse of this process has given us **a newt** from **an eft** and **an apron** from **a naperon.**

1356. These were probably priests, as **Sir** was the usual term applied to the secular clergy; cf. note on VII, 4000.

1364. **hire.** Editors generally adopt **thee** from Pw and other MSS. But the man has already been 'piled,' cf. 1362 and 1365 (**as in this cas**).

1367. **briberyes:** 'robberies' or 'thefts,' cf. *OED.*

1369. **dogge for the bowe:** 'a dog trained to accompany an archer and to follow a hurt deer'; cf. IV, 2014, and the beautiful panegyric on the intelligence and moral character of hunting dogs in Baillie-Grohman (ch. xii, pp. 75–84).

1373. **fruyt of al his rente,** 'the substance of all his income'; cf. l. 1451.

1377. Twenty-seven manuscripts including Ha^4 read **Rood for;** Gg, Ps read **Wente for;** Gl, Nl, Ra^3, Tc^1 read **Redy for;** twenty-one manuscripts including El and Hg have simple **For** — all these omit **And** in l. 1379.

Ribibe, like **rebekke** (III, 1573) is a slang term for 'an old woman.' Both words properly mean 'a kind of fiddle.' No doubt this use of **rebekke** was influenced by the mention of Rebecca in the marriage service, as Skeat suggested; but he was probably wrong in rejecting Hallowell's suggestion of a pun between **vetula,**' an old woman,' and **vitula, vidula,** the etymon of the word **viol.**

1380ff. Cf. the description of the Yeoman in I, 101–17.

1413. **north contree**; an ambiguous term meaning either 'North England' or 'the infernal regions.' Satan was commonly said in the Middle Ages to have his habitation in the North. The association of evil with the North seems to come rather from the Bible than, as Skeat suggests, from Norse mythology; cf. the numerous passages about the North in the Old Testament, which may be found by consulting any concordance. The mediaeval view is expressed in the current proverb: "All evil from the North," "Ab Aquilone omne malum," and in Lucifer's declaration, "I will place my throne in the North," "Ponam sedem meum in Aquilone."

1436. A proverbial expression still current.

1451. See note on I, 256, and cf. III, 1373.

1459. It was known that devils could assume any shape desired; therefore the question whether they had any definite form of their own was a subject for subtle theological discussion.

1463. **yow,** 'to you.'

1502f. The legend of St. Dunstan's control of the Devil has not been discovered. Various instances are related in which the apostles made use of devils.

1510. **Phitonissa,** another spelling of 'Pythonissa,' the name given in the Vulgate text of 1 *Chron.* x, 13 to the Witch of Endor. The incident referred to is that related in 1 *Sam.* xxviii, 8–25. The fiend here suggests that God sent a devil in the form of Samuel to prophesy the doom of Saul.

1519f. Referring to the description of the underworld in Vergil's *Aeneid*, vi, 268ff., and Dante's *Inferno*. **Rede in a chayer** means 'deliver a formal lecture.'

1564. **Seint Loy.** See the note on I, 120, but Saint Loy was also the patron saint of horseshoers, blacksmiths, and carters. The carter's reasons for invoking the saint were very different from those of the Prioress. A fine fourteenth century statue on Or San Michele, in Florence, represents St. Loy as a blacksmith.

1570. According to ancient custom a landlord could claim the use of a tenant's horses and carts without payment, and the tenant could get a release only by paying **cariage.** The Devil jests about his failure to get any money from giving up his claim to the carter's horses.

1579f. Probably a slight joke at the canniness of the men of the North.

1582. **virytrate;** the term **trot** or **trat** is often applied to an old woman. **Virytrate** may be either provincial or slang. It is not known to occur elsewhere.

1602. **com of,** colloquial, like **come on.**

1613. St. Anne was the mother of the Virgin Mary. There seems no particular reason why the summoner should swear by her rather than any other saint.

1618. **lixt:** 'liest,' perhaps pronounced *list.*

1626. **Mabely.** On the name, cf. "Item, Mabilia Lance quondam tenuit duo mesnagia," (Oxf. Hist. Soc. *Collectanea,* IV, 76).

1630. **stot,** properly 'a stallion' or 'a bullock,' but here merely a term of abuse. The contrast between the manners of the summoner and those of the Devil is delightful.

1635. **by right,** because the old woman had wished them to the Devil in sincerity and had not repented as the carter had done.

THE PROLOGE OF THE SOMONOURS TALE (1665–1708)

The Summoner is the most disreputable member of the Canterbury group; cf. I, 623ff. and notes. Both his prologue and his tale are too vulgar to be given in full, but the picture of the Friar's visit is too famous to be omitted.

THE SOMONOURS TALE (1709–2294)

1722. **possessioners,** 'monks' and 'the beneficed clergy'; between whom and the friars there were perpetual jealousies.

1724f. **trentals,** offices of thirty masses for the benefit of souls in Purgatory. The masses were usually sung on thirty consecutive days; the Friar argues that it is better to sing them all on the same day and deliver the soul at once.

1730f. Pictures of the torments of hell involving the use of hooks, awls, and boiling, baking, and broiling are common in mediaeval literature and art. One of the most distressing is that reproduced from a MS in Sharpe's *Dissertation on The Coventry Mysteries,* where the torturing fiends are half human and half animal in form. Similar figures appear among the decorations of mediaeval churches and cathedrals.

1734. **qui cum patre,** the beginning of the formula with which prayers and sermons were ended — "who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever." Here, as often, it is used as a formula of leave-taking.

1740. **His felawe,** in accordance with the rules of the order, the friars went in pairs.

1741. **tables,** 'writing tablets.' Tables were made of leaves of ivory or wood spread with wax, and the writing was done with a pointel, or stylus, of bone, silver, or some other metal.

1747. **A Goddes kechyl.** Tyrwhitt said that **goddes** here and in l. 1749 translates the French "expression *de Dieu*, meaning 'sent from God.'" This popular idiom, usually applied to something of small value, is still current.

1755. **hostes man.** Skeat explains this as 'servant to the guests at the convent,' and quotes Wyclif to show that the man who carried the bag for the friars was commonly nicknamed after Judas Iscariot: "Thei leden with hem a Scarioth . . . to robbe pore men bi beggynge."

1770. **Deus hic,** 'God be here,' the ordinary formula of benediction on entering a house.

1778. **was go walked,** 'gone on a walk': **go** is past participle; **walked** is the same construction as **blakeberyed** in VI, 406.

1792. **glose,** 'gloss,' 'interpretation.' Ancient Bibles gave the text with a "voluminous paraphrase and comment called Glossa Ordinaria. Secular texts — Vergil's *Aeneid* and many standard treatises on various subjects — were also provided with glosses."

1804. The friar's greeting of the goodwife was the usual mode of salutation and has no sinister implications.

1810. **Ye,** 'yea.'

1812. **Graunt mercy,** 'much thanks,' a French expression colloquially pronounced 'grammercy.'

1817. **grope,** the usual technical term for 'examination at confession.'

1832. **je vous dy,** 'I tell you.' This does not imply any special knowledge of French on the part of the friar. Such expressions were common enough in fourteenth century England. But he seems fond of them; cf. l. 1838.

1834. **defended,** 'forbade.'

[FRAGMENT IV (FURNIVALL'S GROUP E)]

THE CLERKES PROLOGE

The story of Griselda is one of the most famous in mediaeval and modern literature. The earliest known version of it is that forming the tenth novel of the tenth day of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*. Ultimately, as D. D. Griffith has shown in an unpublished Chicago dissertation, it is derived from two types of folk tales — parts I–V from a Cupid and Psyche tale, part VI from a tale like *Lai le Frêne*. In *Archivum Romanum*, VIII, 281–93, Eduard Castle attempts to show that the four Griselda *Märchen* published by A. Köhler in Gosche's *Archiv*, I, 409–27 (1870), were not derived from Boccaccio, but represent earlier versions. He is probably right in this, but he does not seem to understand the folktale relationship.

Petrarch for some reason did not read Boccaccio's version for many years,

but was then so delighted with it that he translated it into Latin, in order to make it accessible, not merely to Italians, but to the whole world of educated men. This Latin version Petrarch sent to Boccaccio in the spring of 1373, in a letter explaining his reasons for making the translation, and incidentally remarking that he had heard a version of the story many years before. Chaucer's version is based, not upon Boccaccio's Italian, but upon Petrarch's Latin version, or possibly some French translation of it. Petrarch's letter to Boccaccio furnished some of the suggestions for the Clerkes Prologue. **Heigh style,** l. 18, was very probably suggested by the words **alio stilo** (misread or miswritten **alto stilo**; see note on ll. 1142–62) in Petrarch's letter; cf. Hendrickson in *MPh*, IV, 188–92.

The question whether Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua has been much discussed. In l. 27 Petrarch is represented as living at Padua. As he usually lived at Arqua but was in Padua during the time of Chaucer's first visit to Italy in the spring of 1373, the statement of l. 27 is thought to support the view that Chaucer visited him there, but the statement of l. 27 is sufficiently accounted for by a passage toward the end of the letter, in which Petrarch tells of the effect of the story upon a Paduan who was a common friend of theirs: "Legit eam primum communis amicus Patauinus uir altissimi ingenij, multiplicisque notitiae, et cum epistolae medium uix transisset subito fletu praeuentus substitit."

It seems also worth suggesting that Chaucer's interest in Alceste may very well have been awakened by a passage near the end of Petrarch's letter. One of Petrarch's friends having doubted the possibility of such patience as was shown by Griselda, Petrarch declares that we should not set the limits of possibility by our own capacities, and inquires, "Who would not believe the stories of Portia, Hipsicratea, Alceste, and others like them to be feigned fables, whereas they are true stories?" "Quis uel Portiam, uel Hipsicrateam, uel Alcestim et harum similes non fabulas fictas putet? Atque historiae uerae sunt."

16. On Chaucer's knowledge of rhetorical theory and its influence upon his early writings, see Manly, *Rhet.*

31. The name of Petrarch's father was Petracco, which the poet changed, perhaps for literary reasons, to Petrarca. In French references he is often called **Petrac,** or the like; cf. Hamilton, *MLN*, XXIII, 171f., and Tatlock, p. 159.

33. It is commonly supposed that Chaucer is here speaking of Petrarch's Italian verses, but it is practically certain that he refers rather to his poems in Latin. It was upon these that Petrarch prided himself, and it was a portion of his Latin epic *Africa* which obtained for him the coronation as "laureat poete." Chaucer may have known of Petrarch as a writer of Italian poetry, but there is no clear evidence that he did. When in translating one of Petrarch's sonnets in *TC* (i, 394ff.) he speaks of the author as Lollius, it seems possible that he really did not know that he was translating from Petrarch.

34. **Lynyan.** Giovanni di Lignano was professor of canon law at Bologna in 1363, and died there in 1383. His epitaph recites his eminence in civil and

canon law and calls him another Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Ptolemy. Chaucer's singling him out for mention seems to indicate some special interest in him. This may have been because he met him on one of his visits to Italy or when Lignano visited England as papal legate, or because of their common interest in science and philosophy. No doubt many of Chaucer's readers would remember Lignano's visit to England. Perhaps he was liked and honored. It is an interesting fact, the significance of which has not yet been worked out, that MSS of several of Lignano's writings seem to have been known in England in the fourteenth century. For further information about Lignano's fame, see Cook, *Rom Rev*, VIII, 353–82.

41. In the margin El quotes the passage from Petrarch's Latin that Chaucer translates in ll. 45–51. Many quotations from Petrarch's letter are in the margins of the MSS. I shall not give them, unless it seems important to do so.

44ff. The scene of the story is the district of Saluzzo, about thirty miles south of Turin. When Chaucer visited Genoa and Florence in 1373, he may have passed through this district. One of his companions, Jacopo de Provano, came from Carignano, a village half way between Turin and Saluzzo. Boccaccio's version of the story was certainly in circulation then.

Chaucer gives the names of the places their French forms, not their Italian, or, with the exception of Vesulus, their Latin. Either it was his habit to use French forms of foreign names or he really worked, not from Petrarch's Latin, but from a French version of it. Cook argues that Chaucer used a French version (*Rom Rev*, VIII, 210–22).

THE CLERKES TALE

57. In the margin is quoted from Petrarch:

Inter cetera ad radicem Vesuli terra saluciarum vicis et castellis.

82. **leet he slyde,** colloquial, if not slang.

88. **that.** This word goes with **he** of the next line to form a relative.

106. **us lyketh yow.** We expect **ye** for **yow,** but it is possible that Chaucer treats **yow** as if it were the object of the impersonal **us lyketh,** in spite of the grammatical difficulty involved.

197. From Petrarch is quoted:

ffuit haut procul a palacio, etcetera.

210. "Chaucer calls her **Grisildis** and **Grisilde;** Petrarch **Grisildis** (except once **Griselda**); Boccaccio **Griselda.** The French play of 1390 has the same forms as Chaucer" (Hinckley).

212. **oon the faireste under sonne;** idiomatic, cf. Kellner, *Hist. Out. Engl. Syntax*, p. 111f. (§ 176).

215–17. A Chaucerian addition.

253. **hath doon make,** 'has caused (someone) to make.' In the otherworld story which lies at the basis of this, the heroine's new clothes were of course supernaturally provided. This is one of the necessary rationalizations.

266. **as fer as last Ytaille.** Hinckley points out that "this looks like a Latinism, equivalent to **usque ad ultimam Italiam**" but that "some of the scribes understood **last** to be a verb meaning 'extends,' 'reaches.'" I understand it as the scribes did.

276. The entrance to the otherworld in folk tales is usually through a spring or lake. The well mentioned here is apparently a trace of the ancient tale.

350. **avyse,** 'consider the matter'; compare the regular formula, **le roy s'avisera,** for expressing the royal refusal to a proposed measure.

403. **but dorste han swore:** 'durst have sworn the contrary,' cf. note on I, 1089.

409. **thewes,** 'mental or moral qualities.'

414. The word order is awkward, probably for the sake of the rhyme.

422. Hendrickson, *MPh*, IV, 191, points out that Petrarch's Latin is corrupt in the printed texts and in the version quoted in the MSS, and suggests that Chaucer may have had before him a text showing the same error, **honestatis** for **honestatus.** The gloss reads:

> Sic Walterus humili quidem set insigni ac prospero matrimonio honestatis summa dei in pace, etcetera.

425–41. The original of these lines is quoted in the margin.

429. **humblenesse.** MSS Cp and La have **homlynesse,** which is nearer to **domestica** of the Latin text. **feet,** Fr. **fait,** 'acts.'

444. **knave;** El has **man** here and in ll. 447 and 612; cf. note on II, 715.

449–55. The gloss quotes the original, from Petrarch, here and opposite ll. 499, 540, 603, 610, 624f., 664f., and 722.

459–62. A Chaucerian addition. In several MSS l. 460 precedes l. 459.

483ff. Skeat regards Walter's use of **thee** and **thy** as "a slight but significant sign of insult, offered under pretence of reporting the opinion of others." Usually Walter addresses his wife with the more formal and courteous **ye,** but in l. 508 the original reading seems to be **thee,** which the scribes of five MSS corrected to **yee,** as not agreeing with **yow** of l. 506.

516. A **mile way** is twenty minutes, a **furlong way** two and a half; cf. note on II, 557.

550. **moste,** 'might.'

590. El has **Pavik** (not **Pauik**); many MSS read **Panik.** Petrarch seems to have **Panicio** and Boccaccio **Panago.** No such title is known.

625. **sikly berth,** 'dislikes,' a Latinism translating *aegre ferre* (Hinckley).

704. Chaucer was not thinking here of bear-baiting. That was not the only purpose for which stakes were used.

736. In the Middle Ages, especially among the upper classes, early marriages were the rule. Blanche of Lancaster married John of Gaunt at twelve, and

the young Philippa, daughter of Chaucer's first patron, was a mere infant when she was betrothed to Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. The early marriage of the Wife of Bath (III, 4–6) is a different story.

738. **message,** probably plural, as translating the Latin **nuncios**; cf. **hem,** l. 739.

834. **Ther:** 'where.'

852–61. A Chaucerian addition.

867f. **your . . . your.** MS authority is about equally divided between **your** and **my.** It seems probable that Chaucer wrote **your,** which was changed to **my** by some of the scribes; cf. l.1. 869. The Latin supports the reading **your.**

880–82. A Chaucerian addition.

903. **a lyves creature,** 'creature of life,' 'living being.'

911ff. The preservation of the old clothing is a feature of the original folktale.

915. **she.** The MSS that have **my** in 867f. have **he** here. But the reading **she** seems to be supported by the Latin.

916. El has **and she more,** and in l. 917 **than at hir** — probably scribal attempts to improve the lines.

935ff. Most **clerkes** were celibates, and mediaeval satire on women was very severe. The sentiments of ll. 936–38 are characteristic Chaucerian additions.

960ff. The requirement that the rejected wife shall assist in preparing for the wedding of the new wife is a common feature of folktales of the *Lai le Frêne* type.

970. Some of the MSS read **feynyng,** but **feyntyng** means 'failing.'

Opposite ll. 995–1001, the MSS have **Auctor,** but l. 1002 shows that they are not the author's comment.

999. **jane,** a small Genoese coin, worth $\frac{1}{2}d.$; cf. VII, 1925.

1037–43. The original for the stanza is quoted as a gloss:

> Vnum bona fide precor ac moneo ne hanc illis aculeis agites quibus alteram agitasti namque et iunior et delicacius nutrita est pati quantum ego vt reor [ego auguror] non ualeret.

1039. **mo:** plural, though the reference is only to herself. The vagueness of the expression has been rightly praised for its delicacy; cf. *alteram,* in the gloss last quoted.

1054. Hinckley puts a period after 1054 and a comma after 1055. It seems better to construe **assayed** both with **have** (l. 1053) and with **was** (l. 1054). Instances of double functioning are not uncommon in informal syntax.

1079–1106. A Chaucerian addition.

1098. Cf. note on I, 1913.

1142–62. The moral of the tale is given by Petrarch in a passage much of which is quoted in the margin of several MSS. Chaucer's lines paraphrase this very accurately:

> Hanc historiam stilo nunc alto retexere visum fuit, non tam ideo vt matronas nostri temporis ad imitandam huius vxoris pacienciam, que inimitabilis videtur, quam vt legentes ad imitandam saltem femine constanciam excitarent. Vt que [quod] hec viro suo prestitit, hoc prestare deo nostro audeant, qui licet, vt Iacobus ait apostolus, Intemptator sit malorum et ipse neminem temptat; probat tamen et sepe nos multis ac grauibus flagellis exerceri sinit, non vt animum nostrum sciat, quem sciuit antequam crearemur, etcetera.

Petrarch tells Boccaccio that some of his friends believed in the truth of the Griselda story, and others frankly declared it impossible. But no story of its time surpassed it in popularity. The wise old citizen of Paris who wrote that delightful book, the *Ménagier de Paris*, to train his fifteen-year-old wife, at the very time when Chaucer was writing the *Canterbury Tales*, translates the story for her benefit and adds some characteristic comments:

> And I, who have put this here only to teach you, have not done so to make it apply to you, nor because I want from you such obedience, for I am not worthy of it — neither am I a marquis, nor did I take you as a shepherdess — nor am I so foolish, so arrogant, nor so youthful in sense that I do not know it would be most unbecoming for me to make such demands of you or similar trials. God keep me from testing you in this way or in others, under color of false pretences. I shall not test you in any way; for suffices me the proof I have made of the good name of your ancestors and of yourself, which I know and see with my own eyes and recognize by my own experiences. And, pardon me, but in my opinion, the story tells of too much cruelty — beyond reason. And I do not believe it ever happened; but the story is such that I dare not correct or change it, for one wiser than I compiled it and gave it its name. And I wish that since others have seen it, you also should see it and be able to talk about it like the others. (Ed. Pichon, I, 124ff.)

1163–1212. Skeat thought that Chaucer's tale originally ended with l. 1162, and that ll. 1163–1212 were a later addition. He regarded ll. 1177–1212 as unsuited to the character of the Clerk of Oxenford. Some scholars agree with him; but cf. Kittredge's brilliant defense of the dramatic propriety of the Clerk's envoy (pp. 194–200). The MSS agree in heading ll. 1177–1212 with **Lenvoy de Chaucer,** but the Merchant's repetition of the words from l. 1212 indicates that the envoy was an integral part of the tale, belonging to the Clerk.

1170–76. In sixteen MSS this stanza is omitted and the fourth stanza of the Envoy (ll. 1195–1200) stands last. All but three of these MSS — Ld^3, To, Tc^2 — belong to Class IIc.

1177ff. A masterpiece of versification. It would be difficult to find anywhere a more remarkable *tour de force* of rhyming. Its only equals for several centuries were two other poems by Chaucer.

1188. **Chichivache,** 'the lean cow.' "The allusion is to an old fable of French origin which describes a monstrous cow named Chiche Vache as feeding entirely upon patient wives and being very lean in consequence of the scarcity of her diet. A later form of the fable adds a second beast named Bicorne (two-horned), who, by adopting the wiser course of feeding upon patient husbands, was always fat and in good case" (Skeat). See Lydgate's poem on "Bycorne and Chichevache," *Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate*, pp. 129ff. (Percy Society, vol. 2).

1190. **countretaille.** The only known meaning of this word is 'countertally'; here it is used figuratively for 'echo.'

1204. **aventaille,** a wide strip of chain-mail attached to or forming part of the **coiffe** and protecting the neck and upper breast; cf. Hamilton in *MPh*, III, 541–46.

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST

1213*–19.* Many scholars regard this stanza as part or a link originally designed to follow l. 1169, and join *CkT* to the next tale. Later, they think, Chaucer added ll. 1177–1212 (headed *Lenvoy de Chaucer* in many MSS) and the introductory lines, 1163–1176, and joined them to *MrT* by ll. 1213–44, cancelling this stanza and using some of its lines in the link following *Mel* (VII, 3079–86); but, by oversight or misunderstanding, the cancelled lines were copied into the ancestor of one large group of MSS. This seems very probable; the *Mel-Mk* link contains other lines also that seem to have been originally written for a different purpose (cf. p. 646, below). Brusendorff (p. 76) thinks the Host stanza (ll. 1213*–19*) should be retained in the text as belonging to Chaucer's final plan.

THE PROLOGE OF THE MARCHANTES TALE (1213–44)

The Merchant has been profoundly affected by the contrast between Griselda and his newly married wife. He is however unwilling to tell his "own sore" but gladly obliges the company with a tale of an old man who married a young wife, in spite of the warning of his friends, and was deceived and tricked by her.

THE MARCHANTES TALE (1245–2418)

The Tale itself can hardly have been originally composed with the Merchant in mind as the narrator. In the first place, there are several lines which indicate that the narrator belonged to the clergy (ll. 1251, 1322, 1384, 1390 and 2055). In the second place, the detached tone of quiet irony is entirely unsuited to the Merchant and contrary to the tone of his Prologue; cf. especially ll. 1267–1390.

No exact original of *MrT* is known, but several similar stories have been discovered and printed (See *Originals and Analogues*, Chaucer Society).

THE MERCHANT'S END-LINK (2419–40)

In several MSS these lines are indicated as part of the Prologue to the Squire's Tale, and are connected with it by the lines now commonly designated as V, 1–8. Other MSS have the same passages but use them as a prologue to *FkT*, inserting the name of the Franklin in l. 1. See the discussion on the order of the groups, Introd. pp. 84–85.

[FRAGMENT V (FURNIVALL'S GROUP F)

THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK] (1–8)

In El these lines are part of a continuous passage headed "The Prologe of the Squieres Tale," consisting of ll. IV, 2419–40 and V, 1–8. There can be little doubt that this passage stands as Chaucer left it, and that he intended to have *SqT* follow *MrT*. Twenty or more MSS, however, place *SqT* immediately after *MLT*. For a discussion of the causes of the displacement see above p. 81, and Hammond, pp. 310f., and her article in *MPh*, III, 163ff.

THE SQUIERES TALE (8–672)

Few if any of the Canterbury tales have aroused so keen an interest among literary men as this unfinished tale of love and Oriental marvels. Among the pleasures of imaginative musing conceived by Milton was to

> . . . call up him who left half-told
> The story of Cambuscan bold.

Spenser attempted the difficult feat of writing a continuation of one theme of the tale, and writers and scholars without number have speculated on the untold incidents of it.

The ultimate sources of both the incidents and the setting are undoubtedly Oriental, but research has not yet succeeded in discovering, either among the tales of the East or among their western descendants, the immediate source from which Chaucer derived his inspiration and his materials. Here it may suffice to remark that Jones seems justified in suggesting that "Chaucer was following no one source but working freely, with a knowledge of the *Cléomadès* and related folk tales, and that the allusions to Oriental customs may have come from varied sources, oral as well as written" (cf. *PMLA, XXIII*, 557ff.).

9. **Sarray**, the western capital of the Tartar empire, situated on the Volga, was one of the finest cities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

10. **werreyed Russye.** In the thirteenth century the Tartars were so enterprising and successful in war that they threatened to conquer not only Russia, but the whole of eastern Europe.

12. **Cambyuskan.** In the six-text edition of El, Dr. Furnivall printed **Cambynskan,** but remarked: "MS more like **Cambyuskan** all through." His note on Hg indicates that it reads **Kambyuskan.** Either form seems possible; but the latter preferable, for the name is undoubtedly derived from that of the famous Ghengis Khan, the founder of the Tartar empire, whose name was Latinized as **Camius.** That Milton spelled the name **Cambuscan,** and accented it wrongly was due to his use of the 1602 ed. of Chaucer; cf. Magoun, "The Chaucer of Spenser and Milton," *MPh,* XXV, 129–36. Skeat thinks that although Chaucer took the name of his Tartarian emperor from that of Ghengis Khan, he took the description of him from his grandson Kublai Khan. This would be a natural conclusion if we were sure that Chaucer's information about Tartar history and customs were all derived, as Skeat thinks, from Marco Polo; but other descriptions of Tartary were accessible to Chaucer, and there was no reason why he should stick to historical facts in constructing his picture of the Tartar emperor and his family. Lines 13–27 are indeed not Oriental in origin but merely an assemblage of the traits usually ascribed in mediaeval literature to great kings.

On the general Tartar background cf. Manly, "Marco Polo and the Squire's Tale," *PMLA,* XI, 349–62, and Lowes, "The Squire's Tale and the Land of Prester John," *Wash. Univ. St.* I, ii, 3–18.

18. **lay,** 'religious law or faith,' in this instance that of the Tartar sect. Chaucer perhaps knew little more about the Tartar religion than that it was a heathen cult.

29–33. The names **Elpheta** and **Algarsyf** are not known to occur in any earlier tale or history (but cf. Hinckley, *Acad.,* 1908, I, 866). My own view is that Chaucer found the name **Elpheta** in some list of the principal stars. In *Liber Astronomicus, qui dicitur Albion,* ascribed to Richard de Wallingford, abbot of St. Albans, c. 1326 (MS Harley 80, f. 51a) it is thirteenth in a list of fifteen. Its position is given as 7*s.*, 2°, 40′ and 44°, 30′. **Cambalo** was perhaps suggested by Kambaluc, the name of a son of Kublai Khan. That Chaucer should use **Canacee** as the name of his heroine is certainly very curious; perhaps he wished to give it pleasanter associations, see note on II, 11. 77–88.

45. **the feeste of his nativitee.** Marco Polo gives elaborate descriptions of the birthday festivals of the Tartar emperor and of the magnificent gifts made on these occasions. See the *Boke of Ser Marco Polo,* bk. ii, ch. 14.

47. **The last Idus** is the very day of the Ides, i.e. the fifteenth of March. **After the yeer** seems to mean 'according to the course of the year.' Chaucer's reason for placing the birthday of Cambyuskan on this date is not clear. Certainly he was not following Marco Polo, who places Kublai's birthday in September; and he can hardly have been confused, as Skeat suggests, about New Year's Day, the day of the White Feast, for he states correctly the position of the sun, and he knew that the vernal equinox did not occur on March 15.

48–51. The zodiacal sign Aries is described by all astrologers as hot and dry, therefore **colerik.** It was one of the two mansions of Mars (the other

being Scorpio), and was divided into three "faces" of ten degrees each, the first of which belongs to Mars, the second to the Sun, and the third to Venus. The exaltation of a planet is the position in which it is supposed to exercise the greatest influence. The exaltation of the Sun occurs in the 19° of Aries. On March 15 the Sun would, in Chaucer's day, be in the 4° of Aries. For further details, see Introd. pp. 138ff.

67–71. Chaucer had heard in some way of the strange foods eaten by the Tartars. Skeat thinks his information came from Marco Polo, but rumors concerning the strange things eaten in Tartary were as common then as those concerning Chinese foods are now.

73. **for it is pryme:** yet apparently at least two tales had been told that morning.

81. It was not uncommon in romances for persons to ride into a hall (cf. *Gawayne and the Greene Knight*). Similar incidents occurred in real life. The surprising thing here is that the steed was a steed of brass. In Chaucer's tale there are four magical gifts, the horse, the mirror, the ring, and the sword. In the romance of *Cléomadès* three kings who are suitors for the three daughters of the king of Sardinia offer three gifts: a man of gold, who sounded a golden trumpet when danger approached; a hen with six chickens, all of gold and able to walk and sing; and a horse of ebony that traveled through the air with the turning of a pin.

95. **Gawayn,** formerly the most famous of the knights of the Round Table. Chaucer seems to think of him as well as of King Arthur as still living in the land of Faerye.

129ff. The term **constellacion** here refers, not to one of the permanent arrangements of the fixed stars, commonly called constellations, but to the temporary arrangements of the planets produced by their motions and the motions of the spheres. In order to perform so wonderful an operation as the construction of the horse of brass it was necessary to choose very favorable astrological conditions, which were watched for (**waited**) with great care. Besides taking this advantage of "magic naturel" the makers of the horse seem to have made use also of the seals and bonds belonging to astrological practice. Accounts of these are given in many of the treatises on magic; cf. Thorndike, *op. cit.*, II, 858, *et passim.*

All the magic gifts are of the Oriental type and are matched in tales of India and Arabia.

160–165. Weapons which produce wounds that can be healed only by the weapon itself appear in poetry and folk lore from the remotest times. The principle is the same as that involved in the proverbial: "The hair of the dog is good for its bite."

193. Lombardy was famous for its horses.

195. **Poilleys,** not 'Polish,' but 'Apulian.'

201. **a fairye,** a supernatural thing; some MSS have **of fairye.**

209. **the Grekes hors Synon,** 'the horse of the Greek Sinon.' The separation of the two words in apposition sometimes produces amusing results in this construction, as: "The erles wif Alein,' i.e. 'the wife of Earl Alein'; "themperours moder William," i.e. 'the mother of Emperor William.'

Homer was little known to western Europe in the Middle Ages, and was commonly regarded as giving an unfair account of the siege of Troy. The western nations, many of which claimed descent from the Trojans, preferred versions of the Troy story derived from Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, two writers who claimed to be eye-witnesses. For a full account of these writers see N. E. Griffin, *Dares and Dictys — an Introduction to the Study of Mediaeval Versions of the Story of Troy*. That the horse with which Troy was betrayed and captured was made of brass is an idea that Chaucer seems to have derived from the *Historia Trojana* of Guido delle Colonne, an Italian writer of the thirteenth century, who put into Latin an abbreviated version of the French *Roman de Troie* of Benoit de Sainte Maure. Both these versions of the Troy story were known to Chaucer and were used by him in *TC*.

219. **jogelours;** sleight of hand performers were common in the Middle Ages and were always to be found at great feasts. One of the famous persons Chaucer saw in his vision in *HF* was such a performer:

> Ther saw I Colle tregetour
> Upon a table of sicamour
> Pleye an uncouth thyng to telle;
> I saw him carien a wynd melle
> Under a walsh-note shale (walnut-shell).
> — *HF*, 1277–81.

A "tregetour" was regularly attached to the royal household. A gift to "Johanni Tregettour" is recorded in the same exchequer account in which Chaucer was paid for carrying letters from Calais to England in October 1360, though the gift to him may have been to a person of that family name. See Moore, *MLN*, XXVII, 80; and Royster (*St. Ph*, XXIII, 380–84), who has shown that there was a famous English "tregetour" named Nicole — familiarly, "Colle"— in Chaucer's time.

231. An allusion to the magic mirror said to have been set up in Rome by Vergil, who was better known in the Middle Ages as a magician than as a poet. For a full account of Vergil the magician see Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*.

232. **Alocen and Vitulon,** celebrated writers on optics; the former, better known as Alhazen, was the greatest of all Arabic scientists. He was born about 965 at Basra and died at Cairo in 1038. His treatise on optics was translated into Latin by the Polish physicist Witelo (whom Chaucer calls Vitulon) in the second half of the thirteenth century. Alhazen is called the first great discoverer in optics after the time of Ptolemy. He was the originator of the theory that the image of the object passes from the object to the eye instead of being the result of visual force issuing from the eye. See *Encyc. Brit.* under *Alhazen*.

233. **writen,** preterit plural.

234. For **prospectives** see the note on III, 1203.

238. **Thelopus,** pronounced 'Telophus.' Telephus, king of Mysia, was wounded by the spear of Achilles and healed by the same spear. Chaucer may have learned the story from Ovid.

250. **he Moyses;** cf. Introd. § 115. Both Moses and Solomon were celebrated as magicians. According to Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica,* Moses made a ring which produced forgetfulness. The ring of Solomon had such power that it enabled him to subdue demons, as all readers of the *Arabian Nights* will remember.

254. **fern asshen:** ashes made by burning ferns.

256. **fern,** "long time," adverbial; note the rhyming of two words having the same sound but different meanings; cf. note on I, 17–18.

263. **the angle meridional** covers the portion of the ecliptic thirty degrees east of the south point; i.e. the sun had passed the noon point; see Introd. pp. 141–42.

264–65. **the beest roial** is the zodiacal sign Leo. Hinckley, following Allen (*Star Names and their Meanings*), thinks that **Aldrian** is a plural, referring to the stars Castor and Pollux in one of the forepaws of Leo. He says that **Aldira** means cubit, and was a name especially appropriate to these two stars, which, being four and a half degrees apart, were used to measure distances in the sky (but see Introd. p. 135). On March 15 in Chaucer's time the Lion began to ascend above the horizon about noon. It would of course continue to ascend for two hours. The time indicated was therefore before two o'clock in the afternoon.

269. **chambre of parementz,** the Presence Chamber.

272. **lusty Venus children deere,** 'lovers.'

273. **the Fyssh,** 'the sign Pisces,' is astrologically the exaltation of the planet Venus; cf. note on l. 48f.

291. **spices** is the object of **hye;** cf. § 162.

299. Hg, Cp, Pw, and La have **at** after **that;** MSS El, Gg, Dd, and Ha^4 have the reading given in the text. Skeat and Hinckley adopt the reading of the first group and regard the construction as a Gallicism derived from the French **il y a.**

316. For the omission of the relative cf. § 125.

340ff. "The horse seems to have disappeared when divested of the bridle by means of which he could be summoned at need" (Hinckley). **Jueles** included all sorts of precious objects, such as cups, saddles, bridles, spurs, as well as precious stones.

352. The old physiologists supposed that each of the four humours dominated for a part of the day. *The Shepherd's Calendar* says: "Six houres

after midnight bloud hath the mastery, and in the sixe houres afore noon choler reigneth, and six houres after noon raigneth melancholy, and six houres afore midnight reigneth the flegmatick."

359. According to the mediaeval theory of dreams those caused by fumes were of no significance; the theory is well expounded by Pertelote the hen, VII, 4111ff.

360. **pryme large,** apparently the same as **fully pryme,** i.e. 9 A.M., when the hour of prime was completed.

372. **avision;** a dream sent as a revelation or a warning; cf. Chanticleer's examples, VII, 4160ff., esp. 4312ff., and on the whole subject see Curry, ch. VIII.

374. **maistresse:** 'duenna.'

376ff. The construction is confused. Chaucer obviously intends to say: "Her duenna, who was inquisitive, as old women usually are, answered and said."

383. El has **an** for **a** before **ten.** The explanation of **an** is probably to be found in Hg, which writes "an x or xij" where the name of the numeral letter seems to have taken the place of the numeral.

386. As the sun in Chaucer's day entered the sign of Aries at midday March 12 and traveled one degree a day, it was now March 16.

387. **noon hyer was he,** i.e. not higher than four degrees; it was therefore only a little after six o'clock.

392. **trench,** not 'a ditch,' but 'an alley through the trees.'

393. **glood,** 'glided'; cf. § 56.

401. **knotte,** like the Latin **nodus** (Horace, *Ars Poetica,* 191). We use **point** for the same idea.

409. **for drye;** El and Gg have **fordryed;** Dd has **ful drye;** the other printed MSS have **for drye.** Editors have usually printed **fordrye** and interpreted it as if it were **fordryed,** i.e. 'completely dried up.' It seems more probable that **for drye** is an example of the same construction as **for olde,** I, 1284, and **for blak,** I, 1286; i.e. it means 'on account of dryness.' Skeat is reminded of the famous Arbre Sec, or dry tree, which figures in the narratives of Marco Polo and Maundeville, but there seems to be no connection between this 'dry tree' and that.

428. **faucon peregryn,** 'a peregrine falcon,' so called because no one ever finds its nest. It is described by Brunetto Latini as well-bred, bold, and well-mannered. That the bird rescued by Canacee is in reality a human being is clear from the story she tells. It has been pointed out that the love story is in all essential features the same as that told in *AA.* This fact and a number of similar expressions in the two poems have suggested the view that Chaucer was engaged in writing them at the same time. This is possible; but I should rather think that, after some years, Chaucer may have taken up

again a theme of earlier interest. Moreoëver, the view that similar expressions in two works by the same author necessarily imply that they were written at the same time seems to me psychologically unsound. The same idea or situation may produce similar phrases after a lapse even of many years.

434. Hinckley points out that **wel** modifies **everything**, rather than **understood.**

435. **leden,** from AS **læden,** which in turn is derived from **latinum.** The Latin language was in such general use that its name came to mean language in general. Neither word is restricted to the language of birds.

458. **as dooth**; cf. § 146.

461. **ferde,** 'acted,' like our colloquial 'went on.'

467. **disese,** not 'illness,' but 'distress,' the original meaning of the word.

474. **aswowne.** Skeat's note seems to indicate that this word is a compound of **on** and **swowne**; in reality the noun **swoon** is derived from this word, which is the past participle **geswogen,** as Skeat explains in his glossary.

479. Cf. I, 1761, II, 660, IV, 1986, and *LGW* 503.

480. **his similitude,** 'his like'; **smerte** is an adjective.

488. The use of **But** here is odd. Perhaps it crept in from the next line.

490f. A proverbial expression explained in Cotgrave's Dictionary as: 'To punish a mean person in the presence and to the terror of a great one.' Skeat quotes also Herbert's *Jacula Prudentum:* "Beat the dog before the lion," and Shakespeare, *Othello* II, iii, 272. Tatlock, *MLN*, XXXVIII, 506f., produces other lore.

496. 'As if she would turn to water'; verbs of motion are often omitted after auxiliaries; cf. § 99.

499. **That:** so El and Gg; most MSS have **Ther.** For **harde** many MSS have **ilke.**

504. The male falcon is called 'tercel' or 'tercelet' because it is normally one third smaller than the female; cf. *PF*, 415, etc.

511. **in greyn,** 'fast color'; originally referring to scarlet dye, which was supposed to be made from a seed, or berry, but in reality is from an insect.

512. **hit,** contracted form of **hideth.** The Vergilian warning, "A snake is hiding in the grass" (Latet anguis in herba, *Ecl.*, iii, 93), had become a common proverb.

519. **corps,** pronounced **cors,** and so written in some of the MSS.

537. Apparently proverbial; **true man** was colloquial for 'honest man'; cf. I, 1326 and *Much Ado*, III, iii, 54.

545. **and** clogs the line, but most of the MSS have it.

548. **Jason;** by some queer error El and Gg have **Troilus** instead of **Jason,** but l. 549 would show that **Jason** is correct, even if **Troilus** were not so thoroughly inappropriate.

559. **til,** northern English for **to.**

582. **the peyne of deeth.** Hinckley points out that the mediaeval belief was that death, being a dissolution of the whole body, was inconceivably painful. He refers to *PT* (X, 213), Hampole's *Prick of Conscience*, ll. 1900ff. (Morris and Skeat, *Specimens*, II, 121–122), and quotes a passage from Bacon's *Essays* ("Of Death") in which Bacon states the whole idea only to reject it.

593. A proverb first recorded in the writings of St. Jerome ("Facis de necessitate virtutem," *Adv. Rufinum*, iii, 2), who has also, "Necessitatem in voluntatem vertit" (*Vita S. Pauli*, 5).

596. Hinckley records as an amusing anachronism that Gower (*CA*, V, 3416) represents Jason when he wooed Medea as taking St. John "to borwe," i.e. as surety. The choice of St. John the Baptist as a pledge of faith by mediaeval lovers is perhaps connected with the folk festival of the summer solstice on St. John's Eve. Brand (I, 330–36) records many forms of love divination practiced at this time; the most famous treatment of the subject in English literature is doubtless Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*.

607ff. The text is from Boethius, iii, m. 2, a part of which is quoted in the margin of the MS. A few lines above this passage occurs the *exemplum* used, in 611–17. Chaucer uses the same *exemplum* in IX, 163ff.

613. **cage;** Hg and Cp have **cages;** Hinckley thinks we should read **cage,** regarding it as a plural, but this seems unnecessary. Note the variation between singular and plural pronouns throughout the passage.

624. **kyte;** the kite was regarded as a cowardly bird, unfit for falconry.

640. Canacee's ring gave her knowledge of the medicinal qualities of plants, but it does not appear why she should choose those that were beautiful of color.

647. El has **In which ther were ypeynted.**

648. **tidyves;** the tidyf is a small bird (apparently not a wren), mentioned as inconstant in *LGW*, 154f. Drayton (*Polyolbion*, xiii, 79) calls it a **tydie;** according to him it is a beautiful singer.

649–50. Tyrwhitt, reading **And pyes** in l. 650, reversed the order of these lines. His action is approved by Pollard, but rightly rejected by Skeat. Most MSS, except El, Hg, and Dd, omit **and** in l. 650, which gives an easy and correct construction. The **and** was probably inserted for metrical reasons.

656. **Cambalus** seems to be the brother of Canace, called **Cambalo** in l. 31. Chaucer's statement of the incidents yet to be told in his story is not clear or easily intelligible, and has given rise to much discussion. The reconciliation here referred to offers no difficulty, and the adventure of **Algarsif** (l. 663–66)

is perhaps of the same character as that in which Cleomades wins the Princess Clarmondine. But who is the **Cambalo** of l. 667, why he fought for Canace, and who were the two brethren with whom he fought are questions to which no satisfactory answers have yet been given (cf. Jones in *PMLA*, XX, 352f. and Skeat's note on l. 667).

671f. Another astrological indication of time, quite in the manner of Chaucer and therefore, as Skeat maintains, probably genuine. Skeat completes the sentence with the words "he entreth," and translates: "Apollo (the sun) whirls up his chariot so highly (i.e., continues his course in the zodiac) till he enters the mansion of the god Mercury, the cunning one." Mercury has two mansions, Gemini and Virgo. The sun entered the former on May 12, the latter on August 14. Skeat supposes that the reference is to Gemini and says: "It is a truly Chaucerian way of saying that two months had elapsed."

[THE SQUIRE–FRANKLIN LINK] (673–708)

Although *SqT* was left unfinished, l. 673 shows that Chaucer intended it to be followed by *FkT*.

676. **I allowe the,** 'I commend thee.' The rhyme with **yowthe** proves that final **e** was pronounced; most MSS write **allowe the** as one word.

683. This does not mean the amount of land that could be purchased for twenty pounds, but such an amount as would rent for twenty pounds a year.

687. **vertuous,** not specifically 'moral,' but 'endowed with excellent qualities'; cf. **moral vertu,** I, 307.

THE PROLOGE OF THE FRANKELEYNS TALE (709–23)

709. **Britons,** inhabitants of Brittany, now called 'Bretons.' We have no examples of the early Breton lays, but a large number of mediaeval French poems exist which profess to have been derived from Breton lays. For an interesting account of the characteristics of these lays the student may read either the section devoted to them in Nitze and Dargan's *History of French Literature* or W. H. Schofield, "Chaucer's Franklin's Tale," *PMLA*, XVI, 405–49. Whether the Franklin's Tale was derived from such a lay or not, it might well pass for one in subject matter and general characteristics. Schofield maintained that we should take the statement in ll. 714–15 literally; but it seems more probable that this, like the statement in regard to meeting Petrarch, is merely a literary device and that the tale was suggested by a story in Boccaccio's *Filocolo* (cf. Rajna, in *Romania*, XXXII, 204–67, and Lowes, in *MPh*, XV, 689–728). Certainly the forms of the names **Aurelius** and **Arviragus** suggest that Chaucer was not dealing with a traditional lay, but himself threw into the form of a lay a story which seemed to him to be capable of such a transformation, borrowing the two names just mentioned from Geoffrey of Monmouth and the others from what he had heard about Britanny. For other versions of the story, see *Originals and Analogues*.

716. **burel man,** 'a man of no education'; i.e. such a man as wears burel, a kind of coarse woolen cloth.

Beside ll. 721ff. El has a Latin quotation from Persius (*Sat.*, Prol. 1–2) from which l. 721 is translated. This does not necessarily imply that Chaucer was familiar with the *Satires* of Persius. He may have got this quotation from some collection of fine passages. The spelling of Cicero in l. 722 is peculiar, but there is, I think, no reason to believe in any association of the name with Mount Cithaeron.

723. **colours;** the usual technical term for 'rhetorical devices'; not 'pretenses' as in V, 511.

THE FRANKELEYNS TALE (728–1624)

729–30. In many MSS the order of these two lines is inverted.

731ff. The proper attitude of a lover towards his lady and the whole conduct of love-making in mediaeval and indeed in early modern times are fundamentally based upon the conceptions which gave rise to the courts of love and the **amour courtois** of the twelfth century. But courtly love in Provence and in northern France in the twelfth century expressly excluded marriage as the aim of the lovers; indeed it was held that the courtly love could not exist between a man and his wife. Chaucer's love poems, while preserving much of the spirit and technique of courtly love, treat it commonly as a prelude to marriage. This was probably due to a general social development. For further information on this subject see W. F. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower.*

734. **oon the faireste;** cf. § 106.

764ff. The ideas in this passage were probably suggested by *RR*, but the expression is original with Chaucer.

771. **Looke who:** 'whoever'; cf. note on III, 517. See also l. 992.

774. Skeat cites several authors who express this sentiment. First among them is the so-called Dionysius Cato whose *Distichs* were a common schoolbook in mediaeval and early modern times (cf. note on I, 3227f.). The reference is to Book i, 38:

> Quem superare potes, interdum uince ferendo,
> Maxima enim morum semper patientia uirtus.

782. **complexion,** 'temperament.' The temperament was supposed to be controlled by the four humors; cf. note on I, 421.

786. **kan on governance,** 'that knows about governing.'

792ff. Again influenced by *RR*.

801. **Pedmark.** All the Breton names in the tale are discussed and the physical background of it is described by Tatlock, *The Scene of the Franklin's Tale Visited* (Chaucer Soc.). "Pedmark is the modern Penmarc'h . . ." All the

published MSS but one spell the name **Pedmark(e)**. Tatlock suggests that the **d** is not an error but is possibly a dialectical or individual pronunciation, **n** becoming a nasal **d**.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that Penmarch was well known to Chaucer's contemporaries and after 1386 was in the public eye because of the seizure of three vessels near there by John Hauley and his men: cf. Manly, *New Light*, pp. 170–73.

808. **Kayrrud.** Tatlock tells us that the name means 'red house,' or 'red town' and that the modern equivalent of it is Karru. Places of this name occur in modern Brittany, but none is known near Penmarc'h. Tatlock therefore thinks that it may have been the name of some ancient ruined castle of red Roman brick. **Arveragus** is a Latinized form of a Celtic name. It appears first in Juvenal, *Sat.*, iv, 127.

815. **Dorigene.** Tyrwhitt gave the name of the wife of Alain I of Brittany (reigned 1388–1407) as Droguen or Dorguen. In contemporary documents her name is spelled Oreguen, Ohurguen, etc., but mediaeval texts sometimes call her Dorguen or Droguen. Tatlock (pp. 37–41), in a learned discussion of the name, shows that similar names occur in Brittany as place names or personal names, and concludes that the name of Chaucer's heroine may be derived from one of them, or more probably from the Dorguen just mentioned. In this case the **g** would be hard.

848ff. Tatlock, who made a careful investigation of the Breton coast with reference to Chaucer's realism, points out that at no part of the coast very near Penmarc'h is there "a bold shore facing alarming ledges at sea." Two possibilities present themselves: either Chaucer saw the rocks only from the sea, or there may have been a change in the coast line in the centuries that have elapsed since. The rocks at any rate were and are very real, and they are the essential feature.

880. **thyn owene merk,** 'thine own likeness.'

899. **places delitables,** a French plural; rare in Chaucer (cf. VII, 2038).

900. **tables,** 'backgammon'; chess and tables were favorite games of the upper classes, and are often mentioned in the romances.

932. **beste farynge,** 'handsomest'; cf. **welfarynge** ('handsome'), VII, 3132, and note on V, 734.

938. **Aurelius,** a name of Roman origin but applied to British kings in Gildas and Geoffrey of Monmouth.

942. **withouten coppe;** 'drinking without cup' was colloquial, or slang, for 'getting a beating.'

951f. Chaucer seems to follow Ovid, and the margin of El has the side note *Methamorposios*. The reference is to *Met*, iii, 407ff.

992ff. In the *Filocolo* version of the story the lady promises to gratify her lover if he will procure for her a garden in full bloom in the month of January.

"The removal of the rocks . . . is a happier invention than the creation of a garden in midwinter, inasmuch as [it] could have on the lady's part no motive but solicitude for her absent husband" (Hinckley).

999–1007. In placing ll. 999f. after l. 1006 I follow several of the MSS commonly regarded as of inferior lineage. The improvement is so manifest that I am confident that they preserve a genuine MS tradition.

1018. Hinckley asks: "Is not this curiously abrupt line a mark of immaturity in the poet's art?" Most editors have taken it as the Franklin's jocose apology for using language too ornate for his character and education; but Chaucer was poking fun at the rhetorical figure called *circumlocutio*, cf. Manly, *Rhet.*, p. 13.

1031ff. Chaucer appeals to the heathen gods but is obviously thinking of the sun and moon and their actual effects upon the seasons and tides. The marginal note in El has "The compleint of Aurelius to the goddes and to the sonne," and at l. 1045 explains **Lucina** by "Luna." **Declinacion** in l. 1033 is used in its technical astronomical sense, 'distance from the celestial equator,' which as he rightly explains causes the seasons. Chaucer knew that the highest tides occur when sun and moon are either in conjunction or opposition (cf. l. 1057).

1058. **Leon,** the sign 'Leo.' Aurelius does not ask for a high tide at the next opposition of sun and moon — which would occur during May when the sun was in Gemini; but at the next one that will occur with the sun in Leo, when its power would be greatest.

1074. **hir owene dirke regioun;** cf. note on I, 2082.

1077. Vows to make a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine of some saint were common in the Middle Ages. Chaucer conceives the heathen to have made similar pilgrimages to the temples of the gods. Chaucer is only one of a long series of writers who call Delphi **Delphos.** Skeat thinks this is due to using the accusative case-form. Other editors ascribe it to confusion with Delos.

1084. **thoght,** 'grief.'

1086. **chese he,** subj.; **wheither,** pronounced 'wher.'

1094. **ymaginatyf,** 'suspicious.'

1095. **oute,** 'abroad.'

1110. In the margin El has: "Pamphilus ad Galatheam/ vulneror & clausum porto sub pectore telum &c." This gives the first line of a thirteenth century Latin poem relating the love of the poet for a lady whom he calls Galatea. The poem is an imitation of Ovid, ascribed to a writer called Pamphilus Maurilianus; cf. Lounsbury, II, 370–72. The same poem is referred to in VII, 2945–50.

1113. **sursanure,** a wound healed only superficially, the arrowhead being left in the wound (cf. 1115). One of the many evidences of Chaucer's interest in medicine.

1118. The University of Orleans was famous in the Middle Ages, and was by its situation the one which a student from Brittany would be most likely to

attend. The French poet Deschamps, like the Franklin's Clerk, seems to have read astrology (**magyk natureel**) when he should have been attending to his regular studies.

1130ff. The doctrine of lunar influences seems to have been a separate branch of astrology. Disregarding the usual division of the zodiacal path into twelve signs, this pseudo-science divided it into twenty-eight equal parts, called lunar mansions, to correspond roughly with the portion traversed by the moon in one day. It is difficult to decide whether to take seriously or not Chaucer's professions of disbelief in judicial astrology. It is true that he makes this profession in his own person in the treatise on the **Astrolabe:** "Nathales thise ben observaunces of judicial matiere and rytes of payenes, in which my spirit ne hath no feith ne no knowing of hir horoscopum," pt. ii, § 4. But his knowledge was great, even if his faith was small.

1140ff. Such tales were common in the Middle Ages; cf. note on V, 219.

1196. **ryver,** not 'river,' but 'the bank of a river where waterfowl were plentiful'; cf. notes on III, 884, and VII, 1927.

1204. **oure.** Skeat calls attention to the graphic use of this word.

1225. **goon.** Hinckley translates this as 'proceed,' but perhaps it merely means 'go to Brittany.'

1228. That the world was round was no new discovery made by Columbus or the men of his time. It was the common doctrine of scientific men in antiquity and in the Middle Ages, and several attempts were made to calculate its size. These were very inaccurate, not because the method of calculation was wrong, but because their instruments were incapable of close measurement. Columbus seems to have derived his inspiration from a passage quoted from the writings of Roger Bacon, the thirteenth century English Franciscan. The doctrine was taught and explained in the treatise *De Sphaera* of Johannes de Sacro Bosco (Holywood), which was the usual textbook on astronomy.

1244. There is no particular reason in *FkT* for placing the miracle in midwinter. Chaucer may have been influenced by the fact that in the *Filocolo* version the task set was the production of a blooming garden in January.

1246. The Sun was in his hottest declination in midsummer in the sign of Cancer. He enters Capricornus at the winter solstice.

1252. The actual experiment did not occur until January, the month of the double-headed Janus. El has the marginal note "Janus biceps."

1255. **Nowel.** It has been suggested (*MPh*, XVI, 45f.) that the use of this word and the drinking from a horn (l. 1253) are indications of a Breton source for the story, but both are common features of the great mediaeval Christmas festivities which lasted from Christmas Day to Twelfth Night (January 6). **Noel** is the common French word for birthday (Latin **natalem**), but came to be used specifically for the birthday of Christ and for carols celebrating it.

1263. **conclusion,** practical exercise in astronomy or astrology; the second part of Chaucer's *Astrolabe* is headed: "Here beginnen the conclusions of

the astrolabie." The first of them is: "To find the degree in which the sun is day by day," and there follows a series of exercises in the use of the instrument.

1273. **tables Tolletanes.** The most widely used astronomical tables of the Middle Ages were those originally calculated for the latitude of Toledo. For the use made of them by the clerk, cf. Introd. p. 136.

1280ff. The eighth sphere contained the fixed stars and was therefore of course the sphere of the constellations. The zodiacal signs were originally theoretical divisions of the zodiacal circle located in the ninth sphere or primum mobile. The positions of the constellations and the zodiacal signs corresponded at a remote period in the past, called the beginning of the Great or Platonic Year, a period of approximately 36,000 solar years. The beginning of the first year is supposed to have coincided with the date of the creation of the world, and it was held that with the completion of each Great Year and the beginning of the next the events of history would begin to repeat themselves. A gloss in the MSS beside ll. 1281f. explains that **Alnath** is the name of the first mansion of the moon. This is true; but the reference in the text is to the bright star **Alnath,** from which the mansion got its name. As this star was near the beginning of the constellation Aries, it had, by the **wirking** of that sphere (cf. Introd. p. 136), been "shoved" away from **thilke fixe Aries,** the first point of the sign Aries, which lay in the ninth sphere. Chaucer's explanation of the processes of his astrologer is accurate enough; but was probably no more intelligible to the ordinary fourteenth century reader than it is to the reader of today. His main purpose was to produce upon the reader the impression of great learning and scientific accuracy on the part of the **subtil clerk.**

1285–90. The moon was of especial influence in such magical operations, and the clerk needed to know its position and movements in order to choose a propitious time. For **face** and **term** see Introd. p. 319. The **moones mansion** (l. 1289) is one of the eight and twenty lunar mansions mentioned in l. 1130 above.

1305. **cares colde,** a common expression for serious distresses of any kind.

1325. **youre grace,** 'of your favor,' as contrasted with **of right,** 'as a right.'

1354. **compleynt.** Complaints were a favorite form of fourteenth century lyric. Chaucer has several; cf. "The Compleynte unto Pite," "The Compleynte of Mars," "Compleynte to his Lady," "The Compleynte of Faire Anelida to False Arcite." "The Compleynte of Venus," "Fortune," and "The Compleynte of Chaucer to his Purse." Most of these are very elaborate metrically. In the present instance and in the brief "Compleynte of the Man in Black," *BD,* 475–86, the form is simpler.

1367–1456. These lines are devoted to citations of twenty-three examples from classical antiquity by which Dorigen encourages herself to her proper course of action. They were drawn from St. Jerome's treatise *Against Jovinian,* as is definitely stated in the last of seventeen glosses written opposite these lines in MSS El and Ad^3.

Chaucer's use of "examples" is undoubtedly due to the precepts of the rhetoricians and the influence of Machaut. Machaut's latest editor, Hoepffner, credits him with giving vogue to this curious pedantic device. "It is in the *Dit de l'Alerion* that Guillaume uses it for the first time. Thereafter he wrote no poem in which these examples do not occupy a considerable place . . . Poets contemporary with Machaut inform us of the importance then ascribed to these narratives, equally amusing and instructive, which in discussions and disputes were arguments of high value. Machaut draws his examples from various sources: most of them are borrowed from ancient mythology and history" (Hoepffner, *Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, I, Introd. lxxiii).

1455–56. These lines are found only in El and Ad^3, but they seem to be genuine.

1471. **and,** 'if.'

1479. A much-admired line, but often misunderstood; **trouthe** does not mean 'truth,' but 'troth,' i.e. 'one's pledged word.' Probably it was suggested by the motto on the tomb of King Edward I: "Pactum serva."

1493–98. El and Ad^3 are the only MSS that have these lines, the other forty-six MSS that have the tale omit them; but they sound genuine.

1580. **goon a-begged;** cf. note on VI, 406.

1602. **apparence,** used as a technical term.

1611f. Debates upon the relative merits of knight and clerk as a lover are frequent in mediaeval literature, but there seems to be no special reference to them in these lines. The present question is one of generosity between a husband, a lover, and a clerk, as is distinctly stated in ll. 1621f. Cf. Manly, *What is the Parlement of Foules?* (Morsbach Festschrift).

[FRAGMENT VI (FURNIVALL'S GROUP C)]

The position of this fragment in the series of tales has been the subject of much discussion. Almost all the MSS place it late, but Furnivall and others shift it to an early position; see the references in Hammond. The best argument for an early position is Moore's, *PMLA*, XXX, 116–22.

THE PHISICIENS TALE (1–286)

This is the well-known story of the sacrifice of the maiden Virginia by her father to save her from the lust of Appius Claudius. The ultimate source of the legend is Livy, iii, 44–58. Tyrwhitt, Lounsbury, Skeat, Pollard, and others hold that Chaucer's real source was *RR* (5589–5658). This is denied by Fansler (*Chaucer and the RR*, pp. 30–36), who, while admitting that Chaucer translated a few lines from *RR*, declares that "not more than a score of lines in the English

story can be surely traced to the influence of the *RR*." There is equal disagreement about *PhT* as a work of art. Fansler calls it "the finest English telling of the story"; Lounsbury (II, 281–84) thinks its badness can be explained only on the supposition that Chaucer felt that he could not deviate from his source. Gower has the story, *CA*, bk. vii, 5131ff.; but Chaucer was apparently not indebted to Gower. The version most familiar to modern readers is probably Macaulay's (*Lays of Ancient Rome*), the most powerful is Webster's noble tragedy, *Appius and Virginia.*

Most editors and critics have felt that the tale is not particularly appropriate to the 'Doctor of Physik'; Tupper argues vigorously, but I think unsuccessfully, to prove that it is (*JEGP*, XV, 59–67).

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST (287–328)

288. **Harrow:** cf. note on VII, 4235; the Host cries out as if he would raise the hue and cry upon the false judge and his 'cherl.' On the oaths, see note on ll. 474ff.

291. **advocatz:** Chaucer either has a bad rhyme or uses the French plural (not sounding the **t**). Skeat notes that ten MSS spell the final syllable in the passage without **t**, that is, **cas, case,** or **casse.**

For **juges** El has **false juges.** The adjective is not in the other MSS; it overloads the line; it was probably caught up by mistake from l. 289.

Instead of ll. 291–92, Ha^4 and several other MSS have two lines of doubtful authenticity:

> So falle upon his body and his boones
> The devel I bekenne him al at oones.

300. El and Hg have **moore for harm;** the omission of **for** in other MSS is perhaps due to the desire to secure a simpler and commoner construction.

Instead of ll. 299–300, Ha^4 and Ps have the following lines:

> Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;
> Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!

Ha^5 and Ad^3 insert them after l. 300; and fourteen MSS insert them before l. 299. Most editors admit them to the text as ll. 297–98. I agree with Koch in regarding them as spurious.

303. **is no fors:** the omission of **it** in this idiom is unusual; but cf. IV, 1092, 2430.

304. **thy gentil cors:** 'thy gentle body,' 'thy gentle self.' **cors** has both meanings in OF and ME.

305–07. **urynals** and **jurdones** were glass vessels commonly used by physicians in diagnosing diseases. The name **jurdanes** (which several MSS have here) was apparently applied originally to the bottles in which pilgrims brought home water from the river Jordan, and thence transferred to vessels of similar shape used by chemists and physicians. Skeat and other editors say that **ypocras** and **galiones** are spiced drinks, named after the two great physicians

Hippocrates and Galen. **Ypocras** certainly is such a drink; but I suspect that **galiones** is a word invented on the spur of the moment by the exuberant Host. At least, no other independent instance of its use has ever been cited. No doubt **galion** ought to be a stimulating drink; and St. Ronyan and St. Madrian ought to be good saints; but Harry Bailly seems to be their "onlie begetter." The **letuarie** — in a box (**boyste**) — was a sort of conserve containing an aphrodisiac composition. The Host's conception of the Doctor's art is a low one according to Tupper (*JEGP*, XV, 67ff.), but perhaps this is taking the Host too seriously.

310. The Host is, according to his lights, complimentary in comparing the Doctor to an abbot or a bishop, or other imposing dignitary of the church; cf. I, 439.

Seint Ronyan seems to be the same as **Seint Ronyon** (l. 320). Skeat says that these forms "are evidently corruptions of **Ronan**, a saint whose name is well-known to readers of **St. Ronan's Well.**" But nothing we know of St. Ronan explains the choice of the oath. Tupper sees in **Seint Ronyon** a name coined from French **rognon** ('kidney'), with a play on **Ronan** and he compares **St. Ognon** ('onion'), **St. Raisin** ('grape') and **St. Harenc** ('herring') in sixteenth century French poems (*JEGP*, XV, 67). **Runian** occurs in fifteenth century documents as a term for a farm servant: In 1451 Sir Thomas Cumberworth leaves bequests to many of his servants; among them, to "myn runian, the day, a cowe," and to "my runian, ye Carter, and iij of the best plomen . . . Ilkon of yam iij*s.* iiij*d.*" (*Lincoln Dioces. Documents*, pp. 51, 55).

313. **cardynacle:** so in MSS El and Hg; the others have the normal form **cardiacle**, not understanding Chaucer's intentional use of an incorrect pronunciation; cf. **by corpus bones** in the next line, and note on II, 1189.

315. **moyste,** as applied to ale, seems to be synonymous with *musty*.

318. **beel amy:** Fr. **bel ami**, a common term of address. Taken alone it would give no reason to think that the Host was trying to air his French, but in the light of the tendencies discussed under II, 1189, I am inclined to regard this as probable.

THE PROLOGE OF THE PARDONERS TALE (329–462)

The frankness of the Pardoner in describing his methods and confessing his motives is quite in harmony with that of other villains in mediaeval satire; cf. note on III, 1ff. As a rule, the satirists were not at all concerned to motivate the frankness of the confessions or to attempt in any way to make the sometimes startling revelations appear natural. In this, as in other matters, Chaucer shows his superiority. Not content with establishing a general atmosphere of comradeship and a general tendency to personal confidences among the Pilgrims, he opens the heart of the Pardoner with a good drink before he begins his revelations.

While Chaucer's purpose is satire, the ostensible reason for the Pardoner's telling how he displays his relics, preaches his sermon, and gathers in the money is that his tale is to be just the sermon which he is accustomed to

preach; cf. l. 915. To the references on Rouncival in the Prologue (cf. note on I, 669ff.) add S. Moore, "Chaucer's Pardoner of Rouncival," *MPh*, XXV, 59–66.

333. **Theme.** This is the regular technical term for the 'text,' the first of the six parts prescribed by the mediaeval treatises on the composition of sermons. After having announced his text and translated it into the vernacular, the mediaeval preacher would usually conciliate the favor of his audience by apologies, or expressions of humility, or would engage in some other brief form of introduction to his task. This was called the *pro-theme* and invariably closed with a brief invocation for divine aid. After this followed the development of the text, called the *dilatation*. The treatises give elaborate directions for this. The fourth part, called *exemplum*, consisted in the illustration or enforcement of the moral lesson of the sermon by one or more anecdotes, drawn usually from history or legend, from the experiences of life, from the beast fables, or from that fictitious natural history of animals, plants, and precious stones known as *Physiologus* (cf. n. on VII, 4461). Great collections of these *exempla*, classified under such topics as Avarice, Faith, Swearing, and the like, were made in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for the use of preachers. One of the most famous was that of Robert Holkot, an English Dominican, from which Chaucer has been thought to have derived materials for several of his tales (cf. Petersen, pp. 98–118). Following the *exemplum*, came the fifth part of the sermon, the *peroration*, or application; and then a brief *closing* **formula** in Latin, such as: "Quod nobis praestare dignetur, qui vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum."

Of these six parts the Pardoner's sermon seems to have only three: the *theme* (334); the *exemplum* (463–903); the *peroration* (904–14); and perhaps the *closing formula* (916–18). But the *exemplum* of the Flemish rioters is elaborated by disquisitions on each of the sins of the "tavern group" reinforced by numerous allusions and brief *exempla*. And it may be that the pardoners were not careful to conform to the conventional sermon type as set forth in the manuals. See Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire en France au Moyen Age*, and J. M. Neale, *Mediaeval Preachers and Mediaeval Preaching*.

335–49. He came from Rome, the residence of the pope who was recognized by England. The bulls mentioned in ll. 336 and 342–43 were doubtless copies of those relating to the general subject of indulgences. Besides these he had a special patent with a bishop's seal (l. 337) authorizing him to show his relics and sell his pardons for the benefit of the Hospital of St. Mary of Rouncivale by Charing Cross, and forbidding interference by priest or parish clerk. Then he spoke a few words in Latin to embellish his preaching, and showed his relics.

Hinckley thinks the seal (l. 337) was that of the pope; but the bishop's seal is expressly required by the regulations (see the references in Lea, *Hist. of Confessions and Indulgences*, III, 285ff.). For the practice in England in Chaucer's day good evidence is the well-known passage in *PP.* (Prol. 66–82):

> Ther preched a pardoner as he a prest were;
> And broughte forth a bulle with bishopes seles,

And seide that hymself myghte assoilen hem alle
Of falshed of fasting, of vowes ybroken.
Lewed men leved hym wel and lyked his wordes;
Comen up knelyng to kissen his bulles.
He bonched hem with his brevet and blered here eyes,
And raughte with his ragman rynges and broches.
Thus ye geveth youre gold glotones to kepe
And leveth it to losels that lecherie haunten.
Were the bishop yblessed and worth both his eres,
His sel scholde not be sent to deceyve the peple;
Save hit is not al bi the bishop that the boy precheth,
But the parisch prest and the pardonere parten the silver
That the pore peple of the parisch scholde have if thei nere.

345. **saffron**: saffron was used in cooking to color pies and meats; the color was a rich yellow.

346. Most MSS have **men**, but **hem** is well attested. Koch remarks that Chaucer, like Shakespeare, was not always a strict grammarian.

347. **crystal stones**: glass cases for the rags and bones exhibited as relics of the saints.

351. The **holy Jew** hinted at may have been Jacob (*Genesis*, xxx, 28ff.) though there is nothing in the account of Jacob's trick to explain the effects of the shoulder bone. The practice of divination by a sheep's right shoulder bone (cf. Thoms, *Folklore Rec.*, I, 176–79) has no relation to this passage.

355. Unless **ete** means 'bitten,' the syntax of this line is very astonishing. **Worm** means a 'serpent.'

356. Many MSS have peculiar readings here; apparently the line was illegible or missing in their original.

363. Nine MSS have **drynken**; the rest **drynke**. In any event the word has two syllables. Whether the final **e** of **fastynge** shall be sounded may be left to the taste of the reader.

385–87. The confusion between singular and plural seems to go back to the original of the principal MSS.

390. **an hundred mark**; about twenty times the annual salary of a chaplain.

392. Viollet-le-Duc (*Dict. d'Arch.*, II, 98f.) says that the reformers were the first to introduce seats for the congregations in their churches. Lecoy de la Marche (*La Chaire Française*, 209ff.) refutes this statement with evidence from France. The present passage and the much-discussed passage in Gower's *Miroir de l'Omme* (ll. 5245–56) telling how Somnolence sleeps in church and dreams of hearing the 'geste de Troylus et de La belle Creseide' sung prove the use of seats of some kind in English churches.

406. **goon a-blakeberyed**: go a-blackberrying; no doubt current slang; cf. III, 354, V, 1580. The **–ed** is not the participial ending, but represents an OE

-aƌ (**-ath**), used in forming verbal nouns, like **huntaƌ**, hunting, **fiscaƌ**, fishing (both of which occur in King Alfred's account of the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan).

407f. A close translation of *RR*, 5113f.

413. **hym**: 'my enemy,' lacks an antecedent.

416. This line and ll. 441–47 seem to imply that the Pardoner was a friar; but see the note on III, 163f.

437f. Cf. Kipling, Preface to *Many Inventions*.

438. **that**; El alone has **the**. The repetition of **that**, after an intervening clause, is not uncommon.

440. **for**: because.

444. On the question of the obligation of religious to support themselves by labor and the practice of Christ and the saints in this matter there was a sharp division of opinion between the monks, who labored and held property, and the friars, who lived by alms and professed to hold no property; cf. *PP*, B, xv, 263–310 (C, XVIII, 1–43), especially ll. 285f.:

> Poule, after his prechyng, panyers he made,
> And wan with his hondes that his wombe neded.

Skeat, in his note on l. 445, charges Chaucer and the author of *Piers Plowman* with an error in calling St. Paul the apostle a basket maker. But the error is not theirs. *PP* (XX, 281) says specifically that he is talking about 'Poule *primus heremita*.' The view that Paul the Hermit wove baskets was doubtless derived from a passage in St. Jerome's life of him (§ 16). After his death, the hermit St. Anthony, that he might not be without something that belonged to his dead friend, "took for himself the tunic which in the fashion of a basket (*quam in sportarum modum*) St. Paul had woven out of palm leaves."

THE PARDONERS TALE (463–968)

Why Chaucer laid the scene of this tale in Flanders has been much discussed. Skeat says, "In laying the scene in Flanders, Chaucer probably followed an original which is now lost." Miss Petersen (p. 97 *n.* 3) suggests that he may have been influenced by some of the **exempla** of Thomas of Cantimpré's *Bonum de Apibus* which somewhat resemble the beginning of *PdT*. The first tells of a gentleman in Louvain, in **Brabantiae partibus**, who, as he passed a wineshop (**cellarium**) on his way to matins, in the night following Good Friday, found a strange man bleeding and terribly wounded. Upon being asked who had wounded him the stranger replied, "Those young men who are playing at dice in the tavern." Thereupon the gentleman entered the tavern and rebuked the young men for dicing on such a night and asked them why they had so horribly beaten the man. They denied that they had beaten him or indeed had seen any one since they had begun to play. All then went outside to look for the stranger, but he had disappeared, and turning to one another, they perceived that by their terrible oaths they had again wounded and crucified

Christ the Lord. In the other story we are told of the dedication of a church in a populous town, on the border between Flanders and Brabant, to which came great crowds. Among them was a certain piper who had by his posturing and gestures excited the obscene and vulgar songs of the young folks who were dancing. Toward evening a storm drove the crowd indoors but the piper still went along the way piping his indecent tunes. Suddenly two shepherd boys saw a stroke of lightning strike him dead and tear off his arm and two black dogs seize the arm and run away with it. The curate wished to refuse burial in consecrated ground to so manifest an object of divine judgment, but his friends insisted he deserved it for his devotion in attending the dedication. But behold, the morning after the burial the grave was found open and empty, and it was clear that devils had carried away the body as well as the arm.

Brabant is not Flanders, but Chaucer may well have known these and similar stories, for they were common property of the collectors of **exempla.** Moreover, the Low Countries, including Flanders, were notorious for drunkenness, and the English had a strong prejudice against the Flemings (cf. note on Sir Thopas, p. 629, below).

Certainly, for artistic reasons, Chaucer needed the tavern scene for atmosphere, and needed to place the story in a foreign land. Like Shakespeare, he seems to have understood the romantic value of foreign backgrounds. For further remarks on the art of the story and on Kipling's *The King's Ankus*, see Canby, in *MPh*, II, 477–87. Cf. also Kittredge, *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXII (1893), 829–33.

470. **develes temple:** Hinckley thinks this means "the body of the unsanctified drunkard," but there can be little doubt that Chaucer refers to the tavern. "Devil's temple" is a term often applied to taverns; cf. Tupper, "The Pardoner's Tavern," *JEGP*, XIII, 553–65. The current view is clearly stated in *Le Ménagier de Paris* (I, 48):

> The tavern is the church [*moustier*] of the Devil where his disciples go to serve him and where he works his miracles. For when people go there, they walk straight and talk well and wisely, with moderation and discretion, and when they come away, they cannot stand up or talk; they are either silly or crazy [enragies], and come back swearing, and beating and abusing one another.

474f. Skeat quotes the Parson's Tale: "For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so synfully in dismembrynge of Crist, by soule, herte, bones, and body; for certes, it semeth that ye thynke that the cursede Jewes ne dismembred nat ynough the preciouse persone of Crist, but ye dismembre hym more" (X, 591); cf. VI, 651, and the story of the wounded stranger given above, p. 616. Contemporary historians tell us that the favorite oath of King Henry II was "By the eyes of God!" (*Jocelyn of Brakelond*, ch. 3) and that of his son King John was "By God's tooth!" (Weever, *Fun. Mon.*, 632, quoting *Chron. of Dunmow*); cf. note on I, 120.

477. **tombesteres:** acrobats and jugglers of all kinds were among the most popular entertainers of the Middle Ages. Usually they were strolling players;

they were present in large numbers at weddings and other social gatherings and payments to them are frequent in the household accounts of kings and nobles. The OE termination **ster** (**stre**) indicates a woman — as in **spinster, brewster, baxter,** but not in **minister, master** (which are from Latin). Female acrobats were almost as common as male.

479. **wafereres:** makers of cakes and other confectionery, but they seem to have been regarded as disreputable and dangerous to morality; cf. Skeat's note on *PP*, C, xvi, 199.

484. The Latin side-note is from *Ephes.* v, 18.

488. **whoso wel the Stories soghte:** an elliptical construction of a sort common in Chaucer; 'whoever should examine the Stories would find.' Skeat says **the Stories** means the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor (called "Comestor" as being a glutton for learning), a standard universal history; but Lounsbury (II, 374) says that Petrus tells the story of Herod and John the Baptist more briefly than Matthew and Mark do and does not mention the drunkenness of Herod. Perhaps Chaucer refers to the Bible stories.

492–97. Tyrwhitt quotes the original of this passage from Seneca, *Epist.* 83.

499. A passage from St. Jerome quoted in the margin beside ll. 508ff. gives the mediaeval view:

> Ieronimus contra Iouinianum: Quamdiu ieiunauit Adam, in Paradiso fuit; comedit et eiectus est; statim duxit vxorem (ii, 17).

'As long as Adam fasted he remained in Paradise; he ate and was thrown out; immediately he got married.

508. **deffended:** Fr. **defendu;** cf. 590.

517–20. Suggested by two Latin passages: "So short is the delight of the throat that it occupies scarcely four inches of space" (Pope Innocent III, *De Contemptu Mundi*, bk. II, ch. 17); and "For the sake of the short delight of the throat the lands and the seas are ransacked, and in order that mulled wine and costly food may go down our gullets we sweat with the labor of the whole of life" (Jerome, ii, 8). Both these writings were familiar to Chaucer; the latter is one of the principal sources of the Wife of Bath's Prologue and the Merchant's Tale; the former he says he translated (cf. *LGW*, Prol. (G), 414), and its influence appears in the Man of Law's Prologue and in ll. 483f. 513–16, 534–36, 537–46, and 551 of the Pardoner's Tale (cf. Köppel, *Archiv*, LXXXIV, 411ff.).

519. **to swynke:** Skeat and others write this **to-swynke,** but in my opinion there is no such word. The prefix **to-** (Ger. **zer-**) is not a mere intensive but implies rending and destruction of the object of the verbal action; no verb compounded with it is used intransitively, I think. If my view is correct, Chaucer begins his sentence with one construction in mind and changes to another.

522f. In the margin several MSS quote the Latin of 1 *Cor.* vi, 13.

529f. There is a similar reference to *Philip.* iii, 18.

532. The best MSS agree in reading **Ther**; Skeat, Globe, and Tyrwhitt follow Cx in reading **That they**; Koch follows four poor MSS in reading **That**; in *PT* (x, 819), the same passage is badly corrupted. The parenthetical clause seems to have confused the scribes. Perhaps Chaucer wrote **Thei**, but the scribe of the MS from which ours was derived caught up **Ther** from l. 530.

537. **fynde:** 'provide for,' as now in provincial usage.

538–47. Suggested by *De Cont. Mundi*, ii, 17: 'To the gluttonous, however, suffice not the fruits of trees, nor the pods of plants, nor the roots of herbs, nor the fish of the sea, nor the beasts of the land, nor the birds of the air; but spices are sought out, condiments are contrived, poultry is shut up and fattened for food, and then is prepared with subtle skill by the cooks and served enticingly. One stamps and strains, one mixes and blends, turns substance into accident, changes nature into art, that satiety may become desire, that fulness may develop appetite; for the tickling of the throat, not for the sustaining of nature; not for the satisfying of necessity, but for the gratification of epicurism.'

'Turning substance into accident' alludes to one of the great metaphysical doctrines of scholasticism, as Jephson pointed out. "Everything is supposed to have a substance distinct from the accidents of form, taste, color, smell, etc.; so that while the accidents remain the substance may be changed, and vice versa." In Chaucer's time the subject was a lively one because of the Wyclifite controversy about the 'real presence' of the body of Christ in the sacramental wafer.

548. The marginal passage is altered from 1 *Tim.* v, 6, by changing **quae** to **qui.**

549. The marginal passage came from *Prov.* xx, 1, probably by way of Jerome (II, 10).

551ff. Suggested by *De Cont. Mundi*, ii, 19.

557f. **honest cure:** regard for decency; cf. *PT* (X, 821).

560f. This is based upon a passage in Melibeus, which in turn comes from *Proverbs* xxxi, 4; cf. note on l. 584.

563. **Lepe:** near Cadiz. Spanish wines are heavier than the wines of Bordeaux and La Rochelle, districts which in Chaucer's day belonged to the king of England. Chaucer knew about wines; his father was a wine-importer and had a house in Thames Street near Fish Street. This part of the city was called the Vintry, because of the wine-merchants. **Cheap** (now Cheapside) was well known for its taverns. The reason why Spanish wines tended to creep subtly into the French ones may be inferred from the fact that in 1380 a city ordinance limited the price of wines of Gascony (Bordeaux), the Rhine, Greece, Provence, and La Rochelle to 10 pence, that of Spanish wines to 8 pence (*Letter Book H*, p. 145).

579. Skeat quotes from both Jordanes and Paulus Diaconus accounts of the death of Attila on his wedding night in the manner mentioned by Chaucer; cf. Lounsbury, II, 385f.

584. In the Vulgate, *Prov.* xxxi, 5 reads: "Noli regibus, O Lamuel, noli regibus dare vinum: quia nullum secretum est ubi regnat ebrietas"; cf. l. 561 above.

591f. The marginal passage — Mendaciorum et periuriarum mater est Alea — is from John of Salisbury (*Polycraticus*, i, 5). The same chapter furnishes the stories of Stilbon (ll. 603ff.) and Demetrius (ll. 621ff.).

603–26. These lines are a close paraphrase of a continuous passage in the chapter mentioned in the preceding note. John of Salisbury gives the name of the 'wise embassadour' as **Chilon.** Chaucer may have been writing from memory and have, by mistake, recalled the name of the philosopher Stilbon from an anecdote in Seneca's *Dialogues*, ii, 6, 1. With the story of Demetrius and the dice compare that of the gift of tennis balls to Henry V in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, I, ii.

633. The marginal note may be a cross between the "non iurare omnino" of *Matt.* v, 34 and "Nolite iurare" of *James*, v, 12. MS Dd refers it to *Matt.* v.

635. *Jeremiah*, iv, 2 is quoted in the margin as a gloss.

639–41. The ten commandments are composed of two sets, or tables: 1–4, those teaching our duty to God; 5–10, those teaching our duties to our neighbors. The Catholic Church regards what Protestants call the first and second as the first commandment, and divides the tenth into two; cf. Myrc's *Instructions to Parish Priests* (EETS), pp. 27–30, or any other mediaeval manual.

643. **rather:** in the literal sense, 'earlier in time'; cf. 'the rathe primrose,' Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 142.

649f. Skeat quotes Wyclif (*Works*, III, 84): "For it is written in Ecclesiasticus, the thre and twenti chapitre, there he seith this: A man much sweringe schal be fulfilled with wickidnesse, and venjaunce schal not go away fro his hous"; cf. I, 593.

651. See note on l. 474. In a Wyclifite tract, quoted by Skeat, the attitude of the reformers is thus stated: "But here Cristen sayne, that hit is not leeful to swere by creaturis, ne by Goddus bonys, sydus, naylus, ne armus, ne by ony membre of Cristes body, as tho moste dele of men usen" (Wyclif, *Works*, III, 483). Men may sometimes have sworn by the nails that pierced the hands and feet of Christ, but in the present passage, the reference is clearly to the nails of fingers and toes.

652. At the Abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire, was shown a vial said to contain some of the blood of Christ. According to the legend (Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, (1881) pp. 275ff.) Joseph of Arimathea caught some of the blood that flowed from Christ's side. He gave it to the emperor

Titus, who placed it in the Temple of Peace at Jerusalem. Thence half of it was taken by Charlemagne to Germany. In the thirteenth century a portion of this was given to the Abbey of Hales by Edmund, son of Richard, king of the Romans, the brother of Henry III of England. The blood was still shown at the Abbey in the sixteenth century. It was invisible to anyone in a state of mortal sin, but could be seen after the sinner became penitent and by his offerings to the shrine had obtained indulgence.

653. 'Seven is my chance and thine is five and three.' The favorite dice game was that called Hazard. It exists today practically unchanged under the name Craps; cf. note on II, 124f. Seven and eleven were the two most favorable 'chances.'

656. Cf. "I was falsly begylyd with thise byched bones" and "The byched bones that ye be, I byd you go bet" — both from *Towneley Plays*, p. 241; also "That bychyde Conscience," *Mundus et Infans*, l. 633. That **bicched** means cursed seems clear, but its derivation is uncertain. Carleton Brown argues that dice were called **bicched** because they were made of dogs' bones (ossa caninina), *MLN*, XXIII, 126.

662. The hours of the church services were rung by a bell. It was not yet nine o'clock.

664. A hand-bell, called a 'lych-bell,' was carried before a corpse on its way to the grave.

666. **That oon:** we now say, 'one.' **knave:** 'boy, servant.'

667. **Go bet:** a hunting term, but here meaning only "go quickly."

673. **tonight:** last night. In early English **tonight** refers more frequently to the night just past than to that coming.

674. This line may be either preceded or followed by a semicolon according to whether it is construed with l. 673 or l. 675. **Upright,** in such expressions seems usually to mean 'face upward.'

679. Which pestilence is referred to is uncertain; the great plagues which swept England and all western Europe in the fourteenth century were those of 1348–49, 1361–62, 1369, and 1375–76. There were other smaller ones. The disease was that now known as the bubonic plague; for details, see Hecker, *The Black Death* and Creighton, *A History of Epidemics in Britain.*

695. **avow:** the usual form for 'vow.'

696. **al ones:** probably 'all of the same mind.'

698. Sworn brotherhood was common in Europe in the Middle Ages and is still a vital institution in upper India, central Asia, and New Guinea; cf. *KT*, l. 1132, the romance of *Athelston*, l. 23, *Richard Coer de Lion*, ll. 1661–68, and *Amis and Amiloun.* The ceremony of becoming sworn brothers is sometimes very elaborate, involving the mingling of the bloods, or cutting up a strip of turf with a sword and creeping under it. For the East see Kipling's "Ballad of East and West."

710. **be deed:** 'die.'

713. This mysterious old man is indeed an impressive figure, but it seems quite certainly a mistake to identify him with the Wandering Jew, as some critics do, or with Death.

715. **God yow see:** a courteous greeting.

717. **with sory grace:** very discourteous; equivalent to "confound you!"

727–33. Kittredge pointed out that these lines were imitated from the late Latin poet Maximian, *Elegy* 1, l. 1–4, 223–28; cf. also, Marston, *Antonio and Mellida*, III, i, 41–46.

734. **cheste:** box containing his property.

736. **heyre clowt:** haircloth for burial.

743. The marginal Latin is from *Levit.* xix, 32.

748. **where ye go or ryde:** 'wherever you walk or ride'; cf. the Fool's jingle in *King Lear*, I, iv, 134:

Ride more than thou goest.

769. El, Dd, Hg, Ch, Ad^3 have **he**; the other MSS have **they.**

770. Many MSS have **seven** (or **vij**) for **eighte** (or **viij**).

771. Skeat thinks the mention of florins is in keeping with the Italian origin of the story, as florins were first coined at Florence in 1252. But we do not know that the story is from an Italian source; and florins circulated in all parts of Europe.

796. Editors insert **the** before **towne.** It seems necessary for the metre, but the best MSS lack it.

802. Eight MSS omit **the cut;** twenty others have **broughte grasse,** and two have **broughte strawe.**

803. El has **hym** for **hem.**

818. El has **Whal** for **What shal.**

826f. El, Hg, Gg, and Dd read **that right anoon;** Pw, Ln, and Ha^4 have **and that anon;** Cp and Sl^2 have **and thanne anon.** In l. 827 three MSS have **Arys,** the rest **Aryse, Arise;** but the scribes paid no attention to such niceties. The scribe of Cp obviously regarded **Aryse** (827) as imperative, and perhaps changed the text to conform to his idea. With the reading of El, etc. **arys** can be regarded as imperative only if in a moment of forgetfulness Chaucer confused two constructions. If **Looke whan** means 'whenever' (see Cook, *MLN*, XXXI, 442), the reading of Pw, Ln, and Ha^4 may be correct; **aryse** would then be imperative.

852. **pothecarie;** this word early dropped its original **a–,** which was later restored by learned influence. Originally the **th** represented only a **t;** the modern pronunciation is due to learned influence.

858. **destroyed**; Hinckley points out that the word means here 'harassed,' 'disturbed,' and refers to III, 1846f. The Irish appear to have preserved this sense of the word down to the present day.

889ff. The best-known book of the great Arabian physician Avicenna (cf. I, 432) was called *The Book of the Canon of Medicine* (*Liber Canonis Medicinae*). It is divided into books, and each book is divided into fens, which in turn are divided into tractates. The sixth fen of the fourth book treats of poison, and is composed of five tractates. In treating of poisoning, as of other affectations, Avicenna gives elaborate descriptions of the symptoms and then proceeds to treat the causes and the cures. Skeat thought that Chaucer made a mistake in the use of the word **canon**. He says: "He seems to have taken **Canon** in the usual sense of 'rule,' whereas it is really the title of the whole work. It is much as if one were to speak of Dante's work in the terms — 'such as Dante never wrote in any *Divina Commedia* nor in any canto.'" But Avicenna himself uses **canon** not only as the title of his book, but also in the sense of a rule of procedure. I quote only a few examples from book IV: "Canon in dando in potu aquam ordei & sirupum acetosum," fen I, trac. II, cap. x; "De canone curationis fluxus sanguinis," fen IIII, trac. III, cap. xvij; "De canone curationis vlcerum," fen IIII, trac. III, cap. ii; "De canone curationis solutionis continuitatis neruorum," fen IIII, trac. IIII, cap. ij. One of special interest here is the following: "De canone curationis eius qui in potu sumit venenum, *ib.*, fen VI, cap. iiij. That the word was used in the same way by English writers is shown by the following: "For thanne a leche schal kepe the canoun of galion (Galen), that is oon of the iiij canouns," Lanfranc (p. 54). It seems therefore that Chaucer was guilty neither of misusing the word nor of an anticlimax.

891. **Signes** is the technical term for 'symptoms' (Lat. signa); it was not understood by the scribes, and consequently thirty-five MSS have **sorwes**, three have **stories**, and three have **thynges**.

907. Editors commonly explain **sterlynges** as silver coins in general. It is true that **sterling** was a current term for silver of standard fineness, but the coins known as **sterlynges** were specifically silver pennies. The term was in current use.

908. Skeat cites the pardoner of *PP* as taking in also 'rynges' and 'broches.' In view of the scarcity of money in the Middle Ages, rings, brooches, cups, spoons, and the like, were almost as current as coin.

947. **theech**, contracted from **thee ich**; southern dialect; cf. the northern **theek**, I, 3864. On the whole question of the Pardoner's loss of temper see Kittredge, pp. 211–18, or his note on "Chaucer's Pardoner," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXII, 829–33. The most careful and elaborate study of the physical and moral characteristics of the Pardoner is that by Curry, *op. cit.*, ch. III, 'The Pardoner's Secret.'

[FRAGMENT VII (FURNIVALL'S GROUP B²)]

THE SHIPMANNES TALE (1191–1624)

This vulgar tale of an intrigue by which a monk swindled a merchant and debauched his wife is assigned to the Shipman in all the MSS; it clearly was originally intended for the Wife of Bath, for in six lines the narrator speaks as a woman:

> "The sely housbonde, algate he moste paye.
> He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye
> Al for his owene worship richely —
> In which array we daunce jolily.
> And if that he noght may —
> Thaune moot another payen for oure cost
> Or lene us gold." — VII, 1201–09.

Tatlock (pp. 205–08) argues that Chaucer originally planned this tale as the Wife's part of an exchange of hostilities between her and the Merchant, and *MrT* as his reply. Brusendorff (pp. 118, 119, n. 1) rejects all inferences of this sort. I think Tatlock's arguments are good, as far as they go, but he seems to have overlooked the probability that *MrT* also was originally intended for another narrator; cf. IV, 1251, 1322, 1389–90 (and perhaps also IV, 1347 and 1384), which distinctly imply that the narrator was a member of a religious order. Can it have been the Monk, retaliating for the satire on monks in the Wife of Bath's Tale (now the Shipman's)?

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST (1625–42)

The Host's imperfect Latin and the elaborate courtesy of his manner toward the Prioress are charming touches of characterization.

1628. "God give this monk a thousand loads of bad years." The plural **last** is uninflected because used as a measure; cf. our use of **hundredweight** and the earlier use of **pound, ton,** etc., also **dozen, score.** After terms of measure, the name of the substance or material often appears without **of**; cf. IX, 24. The uninflected plural **yeer** is different, and is due to its being in OE a neuter with long stem (cf. § 18).

1630–31. Cf. I, 706.

1632. **In** originally meant a private house, not a public tavern. The town house of a bishop, earl, or other magnate was called his "inn"; cf. Lincoln's Inn — originally the house of the earls of Lincoln.

THE PROLOGE OF THE PRIORESSES TALE (1643–1880)

1643–77. The first four stanzas are a skilful weaving together of ideas and expressions from the religious poetry of the time. The sources of the first

three are the psalms, anthems, and hymns of the Church services in honor of the Blessed Virgin; see esp. the *Prymer or Lay Folk's Prayer Book* (EETS), Brown, *The Miracle of Our Lady*, (Chaucer Soc.), and Tupper in *MLN*, XXX, 9–11. The fourth stanza was apparently suggested by Dante's *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 16.

1644. If this Prologue was not written expressly for the *Canterbury Tales*, the expression **quod she** at least must have been introduced to adapt it to the Prioress. But the use of the seven-line stanza for the words of the Host (1881–1901) suggests that the tale and they were written at the same time.

1651. El omits **whyte**, obviously by accident. The lily as a symbol of the Virgin is common in mediaeval religious verse and prose. According to Alanus de Insulis it was derived from the *Song of Solomon*, ii, 2. For a popular presentation of the influence of the cult of the Virgin upon mediaeval art and life see Henry Adams, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*.

1656f. The union of motherhood and perfect virginity in the Mother of Christ made a constant and strong appeal to the mediaeval love of subtlety and mystery, and was regularly illustrated by the mystery of the unburnt, burning bush which Moses saw. The biblical text, *Exod.* iii, 2–4, became the theme of an anthem, *Rubum quem viderat*, and of a religious play produced in Lincoln.

1669. El has: **And getest us thrugh lyght of thy preyere.**

THE PRIORESSES TALE (1678–1880)

1678. **Asye:** As Brown says, in his masterly study of the legend, there is a general tendency in various versions "either to leave this miracle without local attachment or to remove the scene to some remote place"; cf. *A Study of the Miracle of Our Lady Told by Chaucer's Prioress*, p. 55.

1679. **A Jewerye:** a ghetto, or Jews' quarter; cf. the **Vintry**, the part of London inhabited by wine-importers, vintners.

1681. Owing to the attitude of the Church toward lending money on interest, which was called "usury," the banking business of the Middle Ages was in the hands, first, of the Jews and, later, of the Lombards (or persons so called).

1685. Brown shows (*MPh*, III, 467–91.) that this was not a song school attached to a monastery or cathedral, but a school "of a humbler sort," situated near the Jewish quarter, and that the little **clergeon** (l. 1693) was not a choir boy, but a young schoolboy. Choir boys were boarded at the school; this boy lived with his mother. He was learning his letters; his little friend was learning to sing and to read Latin; later they would study grammar. The **primer** (l. 1708) was probably much like that published in 1537, with the title: *The Primer in English for Children, after the Use of Sarum*. "At the beginning one finds the Alphabet, Lord's Prayer, Salutation, Apostles' Creed, Ten Commandments, Graces (before and after dinner, and before and after supper), the psalm De Profundis, and the Works of Mercy. Then follow the prayers,

as in the ordinary prymer, except that the Fifteen Gradual Psalms, the Offices for the Dead, and the Commendations are omitted. In some of the early manuscript prymers in English one finds similar elementary material prefixed." — Brown, *loc. cit.*, p. 483.

1689. Middle English did not require **of** after **manere** (cf. § 113).

1694. "Whose custom was to go to school day by day." **That . . . his** is Chaucer's usual equivalent for **whose**, but **whos** does occur as a relative pronoun, cf. l. 1661. **Go** was regularly omitted after expressions of intention or custom.

1695. **Eek also** is tautological, like Shakespeare's "many a time and oft." **Thymage:** images of the Virgin, of Christ, and of the Saints were common beside mediaeval roads and streets. Persons passing them prayed or made the sign of the cross.

1702. "A good child will always learn quickly" — an ancient proverb; cf. "The Proverbs of Hendyng," Morris and Skeat, *Specimens*, II, 37.

"Sely chyld is sone ylered."

1704f. In the fourth lection of the matins of St. Nicholas' Day (Dec. 6), we learn that as an infant this saint sucked only once on Wednesdays and Fridays, although on other days he was like other babies: "Cujus viri sanctitas quanta futura esset, jam ab incunabulis apparuit. Nam infans, cum reliquas dies lac nutricis frequens sugeret, quarta et sexta feria semel dumtaxat, idque vesperi sugebat" (Tyrwhitt).

1708f. An **antiphoner** is a volume containing the antiphons, or anthems, of the service. The mediaeval church distinguished carefully the several sorts of sacred songs which we loosely call hymns. As the *Alma Redemptoris Mater* of this poem is an antiphon, it is certainly, as Brown points out (*MPh*, III, 475), the following:

Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia coeli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat, populo: tu quae genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.

The song that begins

Alma Redemptoris Mater,
Quam de coelis misit Pater

is not an anthem (antiphon) but a sequence.

1710. **Ner and ner:** nearer and nearer. Our modern **near** is really the comparative of the OE **neah**, and **next** is the superlative. **Nearer** and **nearest** are new formations.

1726. **Kan but smal grammere:** 'know but little grammar.' Grammar — one of the seven liberal arts of the mediaeval curriculum — included, not only

the study of inflections and constructions, but also the interpretation of the works read.

1728. **Innocent:** here used as a noun. Later the word — like **sely** (silly) — became degraded in meaning.

1743. El omits **than** here and **hath** in l. 1745.

1753f. **Youre:** not an adj. but the genitive case of **you.** For **youre** (l. 1754) El has **oure.**

1773. **Pathmos:** 'Patmos.' Because **th** was always pronounced like **t** in Latin words — cf. the name Thomas — some words having the **t**-sound were improperly spelt with **th.** Some late spellings of this kind have become standard and are reproduced in our pronunciation; cf. **author, anthem.**

1775. **Fleshly** is an adverb; in El the Latin **carnalitus** is written above it.

1817. **Rachel;** cf. *Matt.* ii, 18.

1824. **Hors** is plural (cf. § 18).

1826. El has **the masse.**

1827. **Covent:** an old form of **convent,** still preserved in **Covent Garden.**

1838. **To my semynge:** as it appears to me.

1840. **As by wey of kinde:** in the course of nature.

1843. Cf. *Psalm*, civ, 31. **Laste** is subjunctive.

1850. **anthephen:** pron. 'antem'; the scribe confused the spellings of **antiphona** and **antheme.**

1873. El wrongly inserts **alle** after **us.**

1874ff. In the year 1255, according to Matthew Paris, a contemporary chronicler, the Jews of Lincoln stole a Christian boy, eight years old, named Hugh, and after assembling Jews from all parts of England, reënacted upon him all the tortures of the Crucifixion. They then disemboweled him, for certain uses in magic, and tried to dispose of the body; but the earth refused to receive and retain it. They finally threw it in a pit where his mother found it. Upon the confession of a Jew named Copyn, procured by the zeal of "dominus Johannes de Lexinton, vir quidem discretus et circumspectus, insuper eleganter literatus," the whole affair was discovered. Copyn himself was drawn to the gallows at the tail of a mare and then hanged; and later, eighteen of the richest Jews were similarly drawn and hanged and twenty-three others imprisoned to await the same punishment. Copyn declared that the Jews tried every year to procure a Christian child as a substitute for the paschal lamb, but often were unable to do so. Cf. Brown, *The Miracle of Our Lady*, pp. 87–99.

A play on the subject was performed in Lincoln at Christmas, 1316 (cf. Leach, *The Schools of Med. England*, pp. 192f.), which was probably still played in Chaucer's lifetime. He may have heard of it from his wife or his sister-in-law.

Similar stories have been told in modern times in Russia and in ancient times in various countries; the whole matter is discussed in Graf's *History of the Jews*.

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST (1881–1901)

1884–94. The older editors took these lines as a descriptive characterization of Chaucer. Tyrwhitt called them "a few touches descriptive of his own person and manner, by which we learn, that he was used to look much upon the ground; was of a corpulent habit; and reserved in his behavior." Skeat remarked: "We cannot be quite sure that the poet is serious; but these inferences are probably correct; cf. 'Lenvoy a Scogan,' 31." In the line referred to, Chaucer seems to include himself among those "that ben hore (white-haired) and rounde of shape," which agrees with the jocose description here in ll. 1890–92. But Knott has argued (*MPh*, VIII, 135–39) that Chaucer's manner here and his elvish look are not to be taken as permanent characteristics but as the natural effects of the touching story just told by the Prioress. Certainly I, 31f. represent him as far from shy, and his career as an official bears out this view.

Above or beside the word **me**, l. 1884, many MSS have the name **Chaucer.** **At erst** here means "first of all."

1894. **Unto no wight dooth he daliance:** he talks with no one.

1900. **Ye:** according to Skeat, **ye** is weaker than **yis** and "merely assents to what the last speaker says."

CHAUCERS TALE OF THOPAS (1902–2108)

In making himself one of the group of story-tellers, Chaucer set himself a very pretty problem of manners. It would be highly unbecoming for him to tell the best tale — especially after the very complimentary remarks of the Man of Law — and hardly satisfactory for him to tell the poorest. He solved the problem with consummate skill, by first assigning to himself a burlesque romance that no reader could take for a serious effort on his part; having himself interrupted by the protests of the Host; and then pretending to be reduced to a "litel thing in prose," that is rather a moral discussion than a tale.

The *Th* is commonly regarded as due to Chaucer's desire to satirize, or at least poke fun at, the poorer metrical romances of his day. Certainly he does disport himself gaily with their motifs, their absurdities of thought and speech, and their verse forms and technique. His attitude toward them, however, seems rather one of rollicking fun than of malicious satire; cf. Manly, "The Stanza-Forms of Sir Thopas," *MPh*, VIII, 141–44. To be successful, such a burlesque as Chaucer intended must be planned and executed on the scale of the romances themselves — otherwise it would be impossible to reproduce their wordiness, their longwindedness, their general futility; and at the same time it must be brief. The two apparently unreconcilable requirements are met perfectly by what may be called the "team-play" of Chaucer and the Host.

Chaucer begins his tale with all the requisite prolixity and is apparently ready to go on for countless thousands of lines, but he has recited only about two hundred when the Host abruptly and harshly stops him.

The stanza-form with which Chaucer begins is very common; examples of it may be found in most of the collections of Middle English Romances — cf. *The Thornton Romances*, ed. Halliwell; *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, ed. Ritson; *The Percy Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall. The short verse of one accent (1983, 1993, 2003, 2013) was perhaps suggested by the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, ed. MacNeill (Scot. Text Soc.) and by Kölbing. Half an hour with such romances as *Sir Percevall*, *Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Eglamour* will enable the student to enjoy Chaucer's fun as no amount of quotation could.

But it seems highly probable that Chaucer's primary object in writing was not so much to burlesque the minstrel romances as to produce a satire of the countrymen of Sir Thopas, and that his contemporaries enjoyed its subject matter even more than its form. In making ridiculous one of the bourgeois knights of Flanders Chaucer was sure of appealing to both the aristocracy and the London public. The Londoners hated the Flemings and were always ready to share in any sort of amusement at their expense; in 1381 they joyously took advantage of the insurrection of "Jakke Strawe and his meynee" to kill thirty-four of them. The attitude of the old aristocracy was notoriously supercilious and scornful. Two most striking examples of the laughter with which embassies of the Flemings were received at the French and English courts occur in successive chapters of Froissart (cv, cvi): once, during the siege of Oudenarde, when Philip van Artevelde sent letters to the king of France entreating him to aid in a reconciliation between the Flemings and their lord, the king had the letters read in the presence of his uncles and the council — who burst out into laughter — and then imprisoned the messenger for three weeks; again an embassy to England, charged with making an alliance and with requesting the repayment of 200,000 crowns lent forty years before by James van Artevelde and the states of Flanders, was received with concealed laughter by the lords of the council, who, says Froissart, "looked on them as proud and presumptuous in thus demanding a debt of 200,000 crowns of so very ancient a date as forty years." On the whole subject, cf. Manly, "The Rhyme of Sir Thopas," *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, vol. XIII.

Ill feeling against the Flemings may have been fostered in the minds of some of the English by the fact that for many years pensions were paid by the English exchequer to several of the Flemish leaders. Such men as Philip van Artevelde and Francis Ackerman were in receipt of large pensions for many years, and the commission sent to England to collect the old debt to the Flemings was apparently a charge on the exchequer for many months. One of the Exchequer Bille (3/6/19b) for Michaelmas to Easter, 7th Richard II, records a payment "A gens de Gaunt par ij taill' xxxviij li. vj s. viij d." As this payment was made at the custom's house it suggests the probability that Geoffrey Chaucer saw and knew these "men of Ghent." The same roll records the payment to him of xiij li. vj s. viij d.

Miss Lilian Winstanley, in her edition of Sir Thopas, has argued that the special object of Chaucer's satire was Philip van Artevelde, but this personal

identification seems to me unlikely. But it is perhaps not without significance that two theories so much alike as hers and mine were arrived at independently.

1907. **Sire Thopas.** Skeat points out that Thopas (topaz) is "an excellent name for such a gem of a knight." In June 1354 Edward III spoke of Oxford as "more precious to him than gold or topaz" (Lyte, *Hist. Univ. of Oxford*, p. 166). Whether Chaucer had in view any further symbolism is hard to say. Francesco Barberino (1264–1328) says the topaz was worn by young girls as a charm against luxury (cf. Hentsch, *De la Litt. Didact. du Moyen Age*, p. 109).

1910. No doubt the unwarlike character of Poperinghe was a special reason for making that the birthplace of the hero. Froissart represents the bishop of Norwich, who led the so-called Crusade of 1383, as saying: "We cannot better ride to our profit than to enter into the frontier of Flanders by the sea coast, as to the towns of Bourbourg, of Dunkirk, . . . of Ypres, and of Poperinghe; in these said countries, as I am informed by the burgesses of Ghent, they had never war that grieved them" (*Johnes*, chap. cxxxiii).

An additional reason is suggested by the reputation for stupidity which the men of that place had among their own countrymen. This was enshrined in a Latin couplet written after the king of France had devastated Ypres and Poperinghe in 1328, and is recorded in the *Cronycke van Nederlent:*

> Flandrenses stultos francus rex Cassele multos
> Stravit mille ter C bis duo sexque quater.

1911–13. As a matter of fact, the lord of Poperinghe was at this time a monk. Did Chaucer know this? His opportunities for knowing were abundant. F. H. d'Hoop, editor of the Charters of the Abbey of St. Bertin, says: "It results from charters granted by the kings of France and other persons of distinction that the abbot of St. Bertin was temporal lord of the town and district of Poperinghe, and that as such he exercised the civil power through a prior who acted in his name, except in matters of great importance, such as the alienation of rights. The provost of Poperinghe enjoyed high consideration, and with several monks he occupied very spacious buildings belonging to the church of St. Bertin" (*Receuil des Chartes du Prieuré de Saint-Bertin, à Poperinghe*, Introd., p. xiv).

1914–25. This description of the Flemish knight fits the theory that Chaucer was satirizing the bourgeois knights of Flanders. The comparison of his face with fine bread, his complexion with a dye for cloth, his beard with a coloring for pies and meats and confectionery; the shoes of cordewain leather, the brown Bruges hose — all suggest the tradesman, as does the silk robe that cost "many a jane" (= ha'penny).

1927. **river:** not 'river' but the Fr. **rivière.** **Riviere** originally meant 'the bank of a stream' (cf. V, 1197); then "hawking for waterfowl." This is perhaps the meaning of **river** in III, 884; cf. also **Ywayne,** 1443f.:

> And ilk day had thai solace ser,
> Of huntyng and als of revere.

Tyrwhitt quotes Froissart, i, ch. 210: "(King Edward) alloit chacun jour ou en chace ou en riviere." By a further development the word came to mean "waterfowl hunted with hawks"; cf. "For though it be that hawking with gentle hounds and hawks for the heron and the river (Reuere) be noble and commendable, it lasteth seldom at the most more than half a year" (Baillie-Grohman, pp. 1f).

1928. **goshauk**; not a hawk for a knight. Dame Berners in her *Boke of Hawkyng* (fo. d 3) gives the names of the hawks appropriate for emperor, king, prince, duke, earl, baron, knight, squire, lady, and young man, and continues: "And yit ther be moo kyndis of hawkes. Ther is a Goshawke and that hawke is for a yeman."

1930f. That wrestling for the prize of a ram was a favorite sport among the common people is well known; cf. I, 548, *Gamelyn*, 172: In earlier days it was practiced also by the nobility — cf. Matthew Paris's account of the ram set up in 1222 by the seneschal of the bishop of Westminster and the conflict which arose out of the match — but it is unlikely that in Chaucer's time English or French knights would take part in such plebeian sports.

1942. **launcegay**: a light, slender lance — apparently of Arabian or Moorish origin — well suited for hunting so fierce a beast as a hare.

1945f. What other wild beasts could one expect in the forests of Flanders?

1948f. Skeat thinks the 'sory care' was that Sir Thopas nearly killed his horse. In support of his view, he cites the romance of *Amis and Amiloun* (Weber, II, 410). But the lines seem merely introductory to the events that follow. The term 'a sory care,' where we expect a term implying a dangerous or fatal encounter, heightens the burlesque.

1950–55. Skeat regards these lines as a burlesque on *The Squire of Low Degree*, but that romance was probably not written until fifty years after Chaucer's death; cf. Wells, p. 149. The absurdity of finding the spices mentioned growing in a forest in Flanders is equaled only by the appeal which this stanza makes to the tastes of a plebeian. Cf. note on l. 2062.

1956–61. The sweet notes of the sparrowhawk and the parrot well offset the loud, clear voice of the wooddove.

1959. **thrustelcok . . . her**; so El, Dd, etc.; Ha^4 and others remove the absurdity — and the humor — by emending **her** to **his.**

1968–73. What could better indicate the fierceness of heart of Sir Thopas? **Gaf him good forage** may mean "turned him out to graze"; but **forage** usually is 'dry fodder' and Sir Thopas was quite capable of the absurdity implied.

1974. **benedicite**: trisyllabic, see note on II, 1170.

1977. **Me dremed.** The earlier word for **dream** was **meten**, an impersonal verb with the word for the dreamer in the dative case. The newer verb **dremen** sometimes took the same construction.

1978. Any distinction that may once have existed between **elves** and **fairies** had disappeared not only before Chaucer identified them (cf. III, 859–60) but even before Layamon wrote of Argante, the queen who received King Arthur as "fairest alre alven" (cf. Emerson, *A Mid. Eng. Reader*, pp. 190–91).

1979. **goore:** properly, as now, a triangular insertion in a garment, but often used in this phrase in the romances for the whole garment.

1983. **In towne:** here a mere rhyme tag, in imitation of the language of the romances.

1987. Knights, theoretically at least, got into the saddle by 'vaulting,' not by 'climbing.'

1993. Instead of this line Tyrwhitt, who did not understand Chaucer's use of the single-stress lines, printed three lines:

> Wherin he soughte North and South,
> And oft he spied with his mouth
> In many a forest wilde.

He implied that he found them in the MSS; but they really go back, through Urry to Speght's 1602 ed.; cf. Snyder in *MPh*, VI, 133ff.

1995. This line is found in only a few MSS, but Skeat thinks it is necessary to make sense. Surely the sense is clear enough without the insertion; the main argument for adopting it is that otherwise the stanza-form is varied in a manner not found elsewhere in the poem.

2014. El and Gg have:

> Thyn hauberk shal I percen if I may;

the other MSS omit **Thyn hauberk.** In El the whole line is written over an erasure. Both sense and metre favor the reading of the other MSS.

2021f. Cf. *Sir Eglamour*, 569–70:

> Of the helpe of God was alle his tryste
> And of hys swerde so bryght.

2023–25. Cp, Pw, Ln insert **For now** in 2025, but cf. *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, ll. 1–3:

> Lordynges, lystenyth, grete and smale;
> Meryar then the nyghtyngale
> I wylle you singe.

2026. **sydes smale:** more appropriate for a lady than for a knight.

2039. Why Sir Thopas wished to hear of popes and cardinals is not clear.

2040–77. The arming of Sir Thopas is purposely told with tedious detail.

2043. **And gyngebreed:** Hg and Gg read **Of gyngebreed,** which is probably correct. As has already been said, **spicerie** included not only such things as we now call spices but also foreign fruits, rice, silks, sandalwood; gingerbread, according to Skeat, is still included among spices in the North of England.

2047. **dide:** put. I find no other example of **leere** meaning "skin" "body as a whole."

2050–58. The **aketon** was a wadded or quilted jacket worn under the armor for comfort and protection. The **haubergeon** originally covered only the throat, neck, and upper part of the chest, but in Chaucer's time was apparently a body-covering of chain mail (i.e. interwoven links or rings), reaching even to the knees. Skeats says the **hauberk** was "an upper coat of mail"; but cf. l. 2055: here it probably means the breastplate and backplate commonly worn over the chain haubergeon. A completely armed knight would also have his legs and feet covered with overlapping, skilfully-articulated plates of steel or studded leather (cf. l. 2065); and at this date, his head would be covered with a basinet with movable visor. Some knights wore an **aventaille** (cf. note on IV, 1204) to protect face and breast. The Jews were not only the principal money-lenders of the Middle Ages, but also the principal dealers in jewels and fine armor and weapons. This explains l. 2054, even if we do not suppose the hauberk was actually fabricated by Jewish workmen. The **cote-armour** was an overshirt or tunic of silk or fine linen painted or embroidered with the armorial bearings, or **coat of arms,** as we now call them. It did not protect the wearer but only identified him.

2062. In 1338, says a contemporary poem called "The Vows of the Heron," Robert, count of Artois, labored assiduously to inflame the ambition of the young King Edward III and incite him to war with France. In September he went hunting with his falcon along the river near London and caught a heron, which he took to the royal kitchen and ordered cooked and prepared for serving. While King Edward sat at table, concerned only with thoughts of pleasure and love and peace, Robert suddenly came in, followed by three minstrels and two noble maidens bearing the heron. Announcing that the heron, the most cowardly of birds, was destined for the greatest coward at the table, he presented it to the king, who, he explained, had tamely allowed the king of France to deprive him of the kingdom which rightly belonged to him. Edward, deeply stung by this reproach, vowed on the heron that before the end of the year he would invade France with fire and sword. Robert, overjoyed, made a similar vow, and then presented the heron to each of the knights. The ladies also made vows. The Earl of Salisbury, who was first approached, closed one of his eyes with the fingers of the Earl of Derby's daughter, with whom he was in love, and vowed that he would not open it again until he had invaded France. The lady herself vowed that she would accept no husband until Salisbury's return from the war. Other vows, many of them extravagant and absurd, were made.

This story is probably inaccurate if not entirely untrue, but it illustrates the spirit and habits of the time, and similar actual vows are recorded by Froissart (cf. Wright, *Pol. Poems and Songs*, I, pp. x–xviii, and notes). Vows on the swan, the peacock, and the pheasant form episodes in romances; cf. Wells, pp. 99, 105f., 242, and the references given there. Sir Thopas swears on ale and bread, as befits a bourgeois.

2065–73. The equipment was costly, but it may be doubted whether "cipress," despite its ominous bodings, was ever before used for the shaft of a spear.

2074. The "amble" was hardly the pace for a war horse.

2075. **Ypotys,** the story of how a Christian child converted the Roman emperor, gives a burlesque turn to this list of "romances of prys." For the text of *Ypotys*, see Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden* (N.F.), pp. 341ff., 511ff.

THE HOOST STYNTETH CHAUCER (2109–56)

Chaucer's artistic reason for the interruption of *Th* has already been discussed; see above p. 628f. The Host's disgust is apparently due to the fact that, despite elaborate preparations, nothing ever happens; and Chaucer seems to be on the verge of another long bit of elaborate inaction. The Host obviously wishes a rapid and plentiful stream of adventures.

2123ff. Why the Host declines to regard *Sir Thopas* as being **in geeste** is not clear, as this is the common term for romances. It may be that by **geeste** he means a true story. At any rate, his suggestion of something in prose, containing **som doctrine,** motivates the telling of the long prose *Mel.*

Chaucer's description of *Mel* as **a litel thyng** is a bit of characteristic humor, cf. VII, 2154 and X, 46; but it is literally a **moral tale vertuous.** Its interest for Chaucer and his contemporaries lay probably in the acute and ingenious dialectic contest between Melibeus and his wife and in the wealth of proverbs and maxims of worldly wisdom. We moderns care very little for such observations on human life; our ancestors, believing that "he is a fool who will not learn from the experiences of others," set a high value upon them. In education our emphasis is upon knowledge and power of thinking; theirs was upon wisdom for the successful conduct of life.

2131. For **told** El has **take,** which makes sense; but ll. 2133–38 indicate that **told** of the other MSS is correct.

2148. Note the position of **with** (§ 175).

CHAUCERS TALE OF MELIBEE

This tale is a close translation of a French treatise entitled *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence*, which in its turn is a version of the Latin *Liber Consolationis et Consilii*, composed by an Italian judge, Albertano of Brescia, for the instruction of his sons, in 1246. The French text has never been edited; the Latin was edited by Thor Sundby for the Chaucer Society in 1873. The popularity of the treatise is attested by the existence of many MSS and by translations into Italian, French, Flemish, and English. Chaucer's version occupies fifty pages of the Chaucer Soc. edition; most readers of today will be satisfied with the brief specimen given here.

THE WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE MONK (3079–3180)

3082. No Saint **Madrian** is known. Both St. Materne and St. Mathurin have been suggested, but neither seems especially appropriate. Clearly the Host was not careful in choosing saints to swear by. It will be remembered that his **Saint Ronyan** (VI, 310) also is not found in the calendar. He is the only one of the pilgrims whose oaths are peculiar; cf. **By corpus bones** (VI, 314 and VII, 3096) and **By corpus dominus** (VII, 1625). That all these errors are parts of Chaucer's method of characterizing of the Host seems to me certain; cf. notes on VI, 305, 310.

3083. **barel ale:** cf. § 112 and note on VII, 1628.

3084. **Goodelief.** Miss Rickert has found that Godelief (variously spelled) appears often as a woman's name in fourteenth century records of Kent. It seems highly probable, therefore, that Chaucer uses it here as the name of the Host's wife. Whether it is a man's name (like German **Gottlieb**) or an epithet in III, 431 is uncertain. See Miss Rickert's letter to the London *Times Lit. Supp.*, Dec. 16, 1926, 935 and *MPh*, XXV, 79–82. Kittredge calls my attention to the fact that there was a Saint Godelieva, whose day is April 18.

3094. **home:** missing in El and Hn, but in other MSS.

3107. **do:** make.

3112. **seith:** that is, **mysseith**; cf. I, 3139 and § 100.

3126. The **sexteyn** (or **sacristan**) and **celerer** (**cellarer**) were two of the most important and influential business officers of a monastery. The former had general supervision of the buildings and the church vessels and ornaments, and in a large monastery had one or more assistants; the latter had general supervision of everything relating to the food of the monks and the utensils of cellar, kitchen and refectory; he usually ranked next to the prior. For an account of the monastic officers, see Fosbroke, *British Monachism*, chaps. vii–xxiv; but a few minutes with the picturesque conflicts of the monks of Bury as told by Jocelin of Brakelond will give a vivid sense of the power and wealth of such officials (See the translation, ed. by Sir E. Clarke, in "The King's Classics").

3129. **cloysterer:** cf. note on I, 259.

3134. In the Middle Ages **religion** usually means a monastic order; a **religious** is a member of such an order. In the Church this usage is still preserved.

3157. **sowneth into honestee:** conforms to propriety.

3160. **St. Edward:** Edward the Confessor, a favorite English saint, scenes from whose life often decorated English churches; see Chambers, *Book of Days*, i, 53, 54, or Alban Butler, *Lives of English Saints*, under October 13.

3162. The Monk here seems to be distinctly a sedate and bookish person, altogether different from the conception given in the Prologue. Has Chaucer

forgotten? Or did he change his mind? Which conception is the later? Cf. VII, 3995f.

3163ff. **Tragedie.** This term, applied in classical times only to drama — had, in the Middle Ages entirely lost its original signification. Creizenach's *History of the Modern Drama*, I, ch. 1, contains a good survey of mediaeval conceptions of tragedy. Dante's letter to Can Grande about the *Divina Commedia* specifies that tragedy should begin nobly and quietly and have a revolting and fearful end, and that it should be written in elevated style; cf. *Epist.* xiii, 28–30 (*Le Opere*, Soc. Dant. Ital., p. 439).

THE MONKES TALE

3181ff. *MkT* is properly not a tale but a collection of brief 'tragedies,' ranging in date from the fall of Lucifer to the death of Bernabo Visconti, Duke of Milan (1385). The longest of them is that of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra (16 8-line stanzas); the most interesting is that of Ugolino, Count of Pisa (retold from Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Inferno, canto xxxiii), which seems to have been the latest written.

As the Monk has declared that he has a hundred tragedies in his cell, the pilgrims may well have been alarmed at the prospect of his reciting all of them. That the gentle and courteous Knight should interrupt him indicates that the situation seemed serious indeed; perhaps he was the only person who dared to do so. Hammond (pp. 241ff.) argues that originally the Host was the interrupter, but the evidence of the MSS hardly supports her view.

3917ff. The stanzas on the fall of Croesus are based on Boethius, ii, pr. 2, and *RR*, 6489–6548.

3951–53. I have kept the readings of El and Hg, which seem both more intelligible and better attested by MS authority than those adopted by Skeat and Pollard. Cf. Boethius, ii, pr. 2: What other thynge bywaylen the cryinges of tragedyes but oonly the dedes of Fortune, that with unwar stroke overturneth the realmes of greet nobleye?

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNES PREEST

3972–75. This echoes a passage in the tale (ll. 3951–56), and perhaps the words **no remedie** of l. 3183; cf. also notes on II, 1165 and IV, 1213.

3982. In ll. 3119–20, the Host seemed not to know the Monk's name.

3984. Cf. I, 170. We now say "were it not **for.**"

3990ff. Skeat refers to *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxii, 6:

"Ubi auditus non est, non effundas sermonem,"

and to *Love's Lab. Lost*, V, ii, 871ff.

4000. **Sir John** was a common designation of any priest whose name was unknown; but l. 4010 indicates that it really was the name of this priest.

4006. Cf. VII, 1900 and 2007.

THE NONNES PREESTES TALE (4011–4636)

The ultimate source of this tale is the Aesopic fable of the Cock and the Fox, many versions of which existed in the Middle Ages, but Miss Petersen has shown that Chaucer's immediate source was probably some version of the animal epic of Reynard the Fox. For a study of the numerous forms of this delightful mediaeval satire — or series of satires — see her book and G. H. McKnight *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse*. Hinckley suggests that Chaucer may also have derived hints for his mock-heroic style from the *Speculum Stultorum* of Nigellus Wireker; cf. note on l. 4502.

4017. **catel**: personal property; **rente**: income.

4021. **Keen**: kine, cows. The other MSS have **kyn** (or **kyne**), which better represents the OE pl. **cy** (cf. Scotch **kye**) from **cu** (cow). The final **n**, making a double plural, is by imitation of nouns like **oxen**.

4022. Skeat thinks that the widow's cottage had two rooms, in one of which (the bower) she and her daughters slept, while "chaunticleer and his seven wives roosted on a perch in the hall and the swine disposed themselves on the floor." It seems more probable that the hall and bower were one and the same room; or that the "bower" was the loft above the single room of the cottage. For heating and cooking there would be a fire in the center of the hall and, as there was no chimney, the smoke would find its way out through the door and a sort of funnel which pierced the roof.

The cottage must have been much like that in which the earl of Flanders took refuge from a mob in 1382, as described by Froissart:

> "The earl [of Flanders] inwardly bewailed his situation from street to street at this late hour, for it was a little past midnight, and he dared not enter any house, lest he should be seized by the mobs of Ghent and Bruges. Thus, as he was rambling through the streets, he at last entered the house of a poor woman, a very unfit habitation for such a lord, as there were neither halls nor apartments, but a small house, dirty and smoky, and as black as jet. There was only in this place one poor chamber, over which was a sort of garret that was entered by means of a ladder of seven steps, where, on a miserable bed, the children of this woman lay. . . .
>
> "The earl of Flanders mounted the ladder as quickly as he could, and getting between the straw and the coverlid, hid himself. . . .
>
> [The mob asked the woman where he was. She said she had seen no one] 'but I have just been at the door to throw out some water, which I then shut after me; besides, I have not any place to hide him in, for you see the whole of this house; here is my bed, and my children sleep overhead.'
>
> "Upon this one of them took a candle, and mounted the ladder, and thrusting his head into the place, saw nothing but the wretched bed in which the children were asleep." — Johnes, ch. xcv.

4035. **ey**: the normal English form; the form **egg** comes from the Scandinavian invaders.

4036. **deye:** not merely a milkmaid, but a woman who looked after the cows and pigs and did other farm work; cf. "Bovers, vachers, berchers . . . deyes et touz autres gardeinz des bestes . . ." Act 37 Ed. III, c. 14, and *Davenport, op. cit.*, p. 29. Sometimes, indeed, the term is applied to a man; cf. quot. under VI, 310 and Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, p. 94.

4039. **a cok heet Chauntecleer: heet** is 3 sg. pret. ind. In PE we can omit an objective relative but, as a rule, not a nominative. Thus we can say: 'I had a cock I called Chanticler,' but not 'I had a cock was called Chanticler.' But curiously enough, we can say, 'I saw a man I think was called Bill.'

4041. **orgon** is regularly plural in ME, because of the Lat. **organa** and because the number of pipes seemed to justify the plural. Contemporary pictures of organs and plastic representations of them indicate that, besides the small portable instruments, there were others, of considerable range; cf. especially Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*.

4044. Some of the mediaeval **orloges,** or clocks, were very elaborate and wonderful. In 1326 the abbot of St. Albans built one which showed the movements of the planets and the ebb and flow of the tides, as well as the time. Similar clocks, usually repaired in modern times, are at Wimborne Minster (c. 1320), Wells Cathedral (c. 1325), St. Mary Ottery (c. 1340), Exeter Cathedral (c. 1310), and a few other places.

4045ff. It was popularly believed that the cock had exact knowledge of the passage of time and crew every hour; cf. the two quotations given by Hinckley, p. 128 and his reference to *Gawayne and the Green Knight*, *MPh*, xvi, 40.

4060. No earlier instance of **Pertelote** as the name of the hen seems to have been found; the derived form **Partlet** is common later; cf. Falstaff in *Henry IV*, pt. I, III, iii, 60.

4069. Skeat found in MS. R, 3, 19 of Trinity Coll., Camb. a song which may be a later version of the one here quoted:

My life is faren in lond.
Allas, why is she so?
And I am so sore bound,
I may not come her to.
She hath my hert in hold,
Where-ever she ryde or go,
With trew love a thousand-fold.

4079ff. Although Chaunticleer is said to have seven wives (4056), six of them do not affect the story, and Chaunticleer and Pertelote are in general presented as a vain and somewhat opinionated husband and his sensible, matter-of-fact wife. Her solicitude for his health is no less delightful than her knowledge of "home remedies." The anthropomorphism is helped by such touches as **gronen** (4076), as well as **womman** (4102) and Pertelote's list of the qualities desirable in a husband (4104–10); cf. the qualities of the ideal king (V, 19ff.) and what Henryson calls the A B C of 'luves lair,' *Robane and Makyne*, st. 2:

At luves lair gife thou wilt leir,
Tak thair ane A B C;
Be keynd, courtass, and fair of feir,
Wyse, hardy, and fre;
So that no danger do thee deir,
Quhat dule in dern thou dre;
Preiss thee with pane and alle poweir,
Be pacient and previe.

4104. **free:** liberal, the opposite of **nygard.**

4106. **tool:** weapon; Hinckley quotes *Romeo and Juliet*, I, i, 31 and *Samson Agonistes*, 137.

4112. Macrobius (whom Chaunticleer so triumphantly cites in 4313ff.) in his Commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* (I, iii), distinguishes five kinds of dreams (**somnium, visio, oraculum, insomnium, visum**), the last two of which he says are unworthy of interpretation. Pertelote obviously classifies her husband's dream as an **insomnium** (or **sweven**), and in assigning the bodily cause she ascribes it to excess of red and black bile (**cholera** and **melancholia**, cf. 4136). She also fears that the sun in its ascension, acting upon his choleric complexion, may cause fever. All this is quite in harmony with mediaeval medical science. Diseases were referred to external causes operating on one or more of the four humors, or fluids of the body: blood, choler, bile (or phlegm), and black bile (melancholia). According to Avicenna, one of the greatest authorities, a tertian fever was the result of cholera; a quartan, of melancholia (cf. *Canon Medicinae*, lib. IV, fen 1, tract. ii, chaps. xxxv–xl and lxiii–lxvii). *Batman uppon Bartholomè* — a sort of family cyclopedia, tells us that excess of cholera causes dreams of "fire, and of lyghtening, and of dreadfull burning of the ayre," while melancholia causes "dredfull darke dreames, and very ill to see" (lib. IV, capp. 10 and 11). For further information see Curry, ch. ix.

4114. **fume:** vapours arising from the humours were supposed to ascend to the cells of the brain; cf. note on I, 1376.

4130f. **Caton:** In the fourth century A.D. some unknown author wrote a collection, in four books, of maxims in the form of distichs. They embodied proverbial wisdom on many subjects, and, being well expressed, became very popular. From a very early date down to the time of Shakespeare they were studied in the schools, and versions of them were made in the vernacular languages. They are commonly cited as *Disticha Catonis de Moribus* and were anciently ascribed to Cato the elder. Pertelote quotes the first three words of bk. II, dist. 32 (ed. 1598):

Somnia ne cures; nam mens humana, quod optat,
Cum vigilat sperans, per somnum cernit idipsum.

(Trust not dreams; for what the human mind desires, hoping for while it lies awake, that very thing it sees in sleep.)

4138ff. In ancient times good housewives prided themselves on a knowledge of medicinal herbs, grew them in their gardens, and prescribed them gladly.

The editors have proved that the herbs recommended by Pertelote are just what a good mediaeval wife would have given her husband under similar circumstances — though she would probably have spared him the digestives of wormes! Curry's idea (p. 224) that a woman would normally be ignorant of these subjects is odd.

4156. As **herbe yve** is extremely nauseous (*The Book of Quinte Essence*, p. 16, says that a "stewe hoot and moist . . . with eerbe yve and sauge" has "an hevenly strenkthe" — which seems probable), **mery** must be used ironically. Chaucer badly needed it here for the rhyme, but in general, he seems curiously fond of the word, using it almost with the freedom of slang.

Curry is mistaken in thinking (p. 225) that **herbe yve** is a species of ivy. William Turner, *The Names of Herbes* (A.D. 1548, ed. English Dialect Soc.), p. 30 says: "Coronopus, named in greke coronopous, is called in Cambryge herbe Ive, and it myghte also wel be named crowfote weybreade, it groweth muche aboute Shene above London . . ." The berries of *coronopus* are called **gaitrys beryes.**

4173. **The verray preeve:** the true proof, experiment. But Chaunticleer, like many another mediaeval scholar, when he praised experiment as superior to authority, did not really mean scientific experiment but only reports or statements of supposed facts by persons of high standing in religion or philosophy. And therefore we have here, in true mediaeval fashion, a long series of anecdotes offered as proof. Chaunticleer obviously tries to overwhelm Pertelote with his "auctours," and he does not even allow her the traditional right of the last word.

4174. The first two anecdotes have been found in Cicero, in Valerius Maximus, and in the *exempla* of Robert Holkot. Chaucer's versions differ from all three and he may have had some other source, but Miss Petersen (pp. 98–102) makes out a strong case for Chaucer's repeated use of Holkot in this Tale.

4235. **Harrow:** this is not merely an exclamation of grief, but the ancient Norman cry with which the community was roused to pursue a criminal.

4240. In the margin the scribe has written "**Auctor,**" as if ll. 4240–47 were an aside by Chaucer, but the scribe was probably mistaken, as the context seems to give them to Chaunticleer; cf. note on IV, 995ff.

4243. **wlatsom:** Hinckley points out that the **w** was pronounced in Chaucer's day. In **Purity** it alliterates with words in **w.** Cf. *MPh*, xvi 41.

4256. As no book has yet been found in which Chaunticleer's second story is in the next chapter after his first, it is possible that he is deceiving Pertelote by a pretense of scrupulous accuracy. His insistence is suspicious.

4257–63. The sentence is broken and the syntax confused.

4300. Legends of the saints were familiar to all educated people of the Middle Ages. Kenulphus (Cenwulf) King of Mercia, dying in 821, left his son Kenelm, a child only seven years old, heir to his crown, under the tutelage

of his sister Quendride. One day Kenelm dreamed that he saw a noble tree with waxlights on it and that when he climbed to the top of it, one of his friends cut it down and he turned into a little bird and flew to heaven. Shortly after, his ambitious aunt hired an assassin who killed him and buried him under a thorn tree. A miraculous ray of light shining above the place led to the discovery of his body. Cf. Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints; Early Engl. Poems* ed. Furnivall, p. 51; and Caxton's *Golden Legend*.

4308. **litil tale hath he toold:** he took little heed.

4313ff. **the avision — of the worthy Cipion.** The **Somnium Scipionis** is a chapter of the sixth book of Cicero's *De Republica*. During the Middle Ages the *De Republica* was little known, but Macrobius had, about 400 A.D. compared Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* with Plato's famous *Vision of Er* (from his *Republic*, bk. x) and written an elaborate commentary on them, discussing the nature of dreams, the properties of numbers, the immortality of the soul, the structure of the universe, and other subjects. This treatise — perhaps because of the Dream — was very popular in the Middle Ages. That Chaucer knew the Dream is certain; he incorporated it in *PF*. Hinckley thinks he did not read the commentary, but this is hardly credible. Chaucer was intensely interested in many of the subjects discussed in the commentary.

4331ff. Homer was scarcely known, except by name, to the Latin world in the Middle Ages. Even Roger Bacon, who wrote a Greek grammar, and Dante, one of the most learned of poets, knew the Iliad only by report. There was a Latin translation, but most of the western nations claimed descent from the Trojans and disregarded the Homeric account of the Trojan war as being untrue. Mediaeval Troy stories are therefore based on prose accounts supposed to have been written by two eye-witnesses: Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. See Griffin, *Dares and Dictys*, or Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, ch. 32, or Young, *Orig. and Devel. of Story of Troilus and Criseyde*.

The dream of Andromache is in *Dares*, chap. xxiv; cf. the *Troy-book*, ed. Panton and Donaldson (EETS), ll. 8425ff.

4352ff. Whether **In principio** refers to the first words of Genesis or to those of the Gospel of St. John makes no difference; the certainty was equal. Chaunticleer, with his false translation, has his characteristic marital jest, with no danger of retaliation from poor Pertelote, who did not understand Latin; but to the reader it is epic irony, for the real sentiment turns out to be as "siker **as In principio**." Mediaeval satirists of woman were fond of the reply said to have been made by the philosopher Secundus to the Emperor Hadrian's question, "Quid est mulier?" The reply was: "Hominis confusio, insaturabilis bestia, continua sollicitudo, indesinens pugna, viri incontinentis naufragium, humanum mancipium." How great a favorite the passage was is indicated by Carleton Brown, *MLN*, XXXV, 479–82. St. Chrysostom has an even longer series of epithets for the wicked woman: "Quid aliud est mala mulier nisi amicitiae inimica, ineffugabilis poena, necessarium malum, naturalis tentatio, desiderabilis calamitas, domesticum periculum, dilectabile detrimentum, mali natura, boni colore depicta." (*Super Matt.*, xix.) And the same saint devotes

a long paragraph in his sermon on the beheading of John the Baptist to the evils wrought by women, beginning with Mother Eve. A thirteenth century MS of extracts on the Vices and Virtues contains a series made up from the two Chrysostom passages, cf. *Manuscrits Libri et Barrois*, p. 192. Cf. also *Mel*, l. 2295.

4377ff. The traditional view was that the world was created at the vernal equinox — normally March 21, but in Chaucer's time, owing to the defects of the Julian Calendar, March 12. Roger Bacon (*Opus Tertium*, p. 208), referring to Josephus, tried to prove that the year should begin with October, but his argument had no effect. The date of Chaunticleer's misfortune was obviously May 3, as March was complete and thirty-two days more had passed. The sun was then in the 22nd degree of Taurus, as it entered Aries on March 11. Brae, in his edition of Chaucer's *Astrolabe*, pp. 98ff., showed, as Francis Thynne had done long before, that Chaunticleer's estimate of the height of the sun and his inference that it was 9 A.M. (prime) were entirely correct.

4395. See *Proverbs* (Rev. Version), xiv, 13, a sentiment repeated with endless variations and embellishments throughout the Middle Ages.

4402f. Cf. VI, 287. Chaucer cannot have forgotten the famous passage in the *Inferno* in which Francesca da Rimini tells to Dante and his guide the story of her love for Paolo and the part played in it by the romance of *Lancelot* (cf. the translation of the episode by Rossetti); but here he is writing, not as sentimentalist, but as humorist. Hinckley points out that Walter Map, the supposed original author of the *Launcelot*, was not regarded as a serious and truthful writer by his contemporaries. About 1185 Hugh of Rutland, like Map a native of Herefordshire, wrote in his romance of *Ipomedon:*

Sul ne sai pas de mentir l'art,
Walter Map reset ben sa part.

(I alone do not understand the art of lying; Walter Map knows well his part in it.)

4409. **By heigh ymaginacion forn-cast:** predestined by divine foresight.

4417ff. **Judas Iscariot** is called **Judas Scariot** in the Vulgate. **Genylon** is **Ganelon** who betrayed the French army to the Saracens in the *Chanson de Roland*. **Synon** was the Greek who designed the horse — of wood, according to Dictys, of brass, according to Guido delle Colonne — which caused the fall of Troy.

4424–40. Chaucer was apparently much interested in the problem of predestination and free will. He discusses or refers to it at every opportunity; cf. especially the long discussion in *TC*, IV, 953–1078. The principal authorities in his day were St. Augustine, Boethius, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Archbishop Bradwardine, but Chaucer nowhere quotes or mentions Thomas Aquinas, and St. Augustine he seems to know only at secondhand. Boethius he not only translated but had studied carefully; Thomas Bradwardine, commonly called Doctor Profundus, was lecturer at Oxford, chancellor of St. Paul's, chaplain of

King Edward III, and, at his death in 1349, archbishop of Canterbury. Chaucer's father may have known him, as they both accompanied the King on his trip to Germany in 1338. In any event Bradwardine's Oxford lectures in support of predestination were famous in their day. They were printed in 1618, under the title *De Causa Dei*, in a huge folio of 876 pages. He also wrote on the quadrature of the circle, on speculative arithmetic and geometry, and on the art of remembering (a system much like some modern ones).

Foreknowledge that involved compelling one to do the thing foreknown would destroy free will. This, following his predecessors, Chaucer calls 'simple necessity.' If however you know that a certain man is doing a certain thing, it follows necessarily that he is doing it. This is 'necessity conditional.' But, as all time is for God an eternal now, he sees the future as well as the present, and therefore his foreknowledge does not compel the actions he foreknows.

4443. **with sorwe:** here, as often, an imprecation about the equivalent of 'confound her!'

4446. Skeat quotes the Proverbs of Alfred (13th cent.) l. 336, "Cold red is quene red," — apparently a translation from the Icelandic; and he refers to a similar sentiment in *Mel* (VII, 2286).

4453. The Wife of Bath gives a full outline of such a treatise; cf. III, 711–87. The blame of Eve for "Man's first disobedience" is a commonplace of mediaeval satire.

4460–62. Christian writers very early drew ethical or theological lessons from the real or fanciful characteristics of animals, plants, and precious stones. A collection of such interpretations of animals was called "Physiologus" by Origen. The old English poems of the "Panther" and the "Whale" belong to this type. A Latin poem, probably by Theobald, abbot of Monte Cassino (1022–35), was the basis of a French *Bestiare* and a Middle English *Bestiary;* cf. *An Old Engl. Miscellany*, ed. Morris (EETS). The *Encyc. Brit.* gives a good summary of modern research on the *Physiologus*. The classical **sirens** were, and still are, popularly identified with **mermaidens.**

4467. Hinckley cites Skeat as having proved that "to cry, 'Cock' is to acknowledge oneself beaten." But Skeat himself — rightly, I think — says, "To cry **cok! cok!** refers rather to the utterance of rapid cries of alarm, as fowls cry when scared." Douglas and Ruddiman, in the passages quoted to support the other view, are merely misinterpreting this passage from Chaucer.

4468–71. This passage calls to mind Charles Lamb's theory of natural antipathies.

4484. How well Boethius could sing was perhaps known only to the Fox, but he wrote a treatise on music that was used as a textbook in the Middle Ages and is still valued for the information it gives about ancient music.

4490. An elaborate assurance that he is speaking the truth; for similar expressions Skeat refers to *Havelok* and Hinckley to *Gamelyn*.

4502. **Daun Burnel the Asse:** In the closing years of the twelfth century, Nigel Wireker, the precentor of Canterbury, satirized the discontent and

worldly ambitions of the regular clergy in a long Latin poem, entitled *Speculum Stultorum*. The hero is an ass named Burnellus — after the fashion of the beast epic — who is dissatisfied with the length of his tail. To procure a longer one he visits famous schools of his day, the medical school of Salerno and the University of Paris. His adventures and experiences are shaped with a view to the satire.

The tale of the Cock's revenge referred to by Chaunticleer in ll. 4503–06 of our poem is told to illustrate the danger of offending even the humble. The story is briefly this: The son of a priest one day struck one of his father's little chickens with a stick and broke its leg. The leg healed, but the chicken nourished its sense of injury and meditated revenge. Five years later when he had grown to be a fine cock and had taken his place as head of the henyard, his chance came. The young priest had, after much difficulty, obtained the promise of succession to his father's benefice and was to be consecrated on a certain day. To celebrate the occasion a great feast was held on the night before the important day, and Gundulf, the young priest, went to bed late and somewhat the worse for the celebration, relying upon the crowing of the cock at dawn to wake him in time to start for the place of consecration. But the cock remembered his ancient injury and despite the remonstrances of his wife — another Pertelote — refused to crow. Gundulf overslept, and lost his benefice. The poem was published by Thomas Wright in *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, I, 3–145.

4519. The reference is, as Skeat says, not to *Ecclesiastes*, but to the apocryphal book *Ecclesiasticus*, xii, 10, 11, 16.

4524. **daun Russell:** in the beast epic of Reynard the Fox, the beasts have characterizing names. *Rosseel* is the name of the youngest son of the old fox in the Dutch *Reinaert*.

4531ff. The reasons why Chaunticleer's misfortune occurred on Friday are manifold. In the first place, Friday is the day of Venus, and Chaunticleer is Venus' servant. Then, too, in popular superstition, Friday is in general a day of ill luck; the great misfortunes of the world occurred on Friday: Adam was driven out of Paradise late Friday afternoon, the Deluge began on Friday night, Judas betrayed Jesus Friday morning, and Friday was the day of the Crucifixion. Chaucer plays on this superstition and in ll. 4537–44 includes in his satire a hit at the stylistic absurdities of Gaufred de Vinsauf, the author of a much admired treatise on the art of poetry. Gaufred not only told how to write poetry but had the temerity to try to illustrate his principles of composition. The passage ridiculed is a turgid, high-sounding lamentation for the death of Richard I — who was wounded on a Friday — addressed to Neustria (the whole Western World). A few lines will show the bombast and the play on words:

> Mors non fuit eius,
> Sed tua; non una sed publica mortis origo.
> O Veneris lacrimosa dies! O sydus amarum!
> Illa dies tua nox fuit, at Venus illa venenum.

(The death was not his, but thine; not single, but a public source of death. O lamentable day of Venus! O bitter star! That day was thy night, and that Venus thy venom.)

Chaucer's knowledge of Gaufred, Nigel Wireker, and other writers of the twelfth century is of interest in connection with the question of his reflections on the art of writing and his remarkable development as an artist. On this see Manly, *Rhet.* Gaufred's *Nova Poetria* is now accessible in E. Faral's *Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle.*

4545ff. The allusions to the fall of Troy, the capture of Carthage, and the burning of Rome are in the usual mock-heroic style popular in all ages. The story of the wife of Hasdrubal, King of Carthage was known to Chaucer from several sources: Valerius Maximus, *Dicta et Facta* (iii, 2), St. Jerome, *Adv. Jovinianum* (i, 43) and Boccaccio, *De Casibus Virorum et Foeminarum Illustrium* (bk. v). Boccaccio's account is the most elaborate of these. For the use of the genitive as a book title (**Eneydos,** 4549), see II, 93.

4568f. Note the confusion of constructions.

4571. **Ha, ha:** This was the regular way of representing a shout to frighten a fox or a wolf; cf. Tatlock, *MLN,* XXIX, 143.

4572f. **man:** cf. 4077, 4102, 4110, 4124, etc. For **Talbot** as the name of a dog see *OED* or *Cent Dict,* s.v. Whether **Talbot** and **Gerland** are dogs, like **Colle,** or human beings, like **Malkin,** makes little difference; in the world of folk tale beasts and men are on an equality. **Malkin** is the conventional name in song and story for a country maid.

4578. 'They ran so, it seemed to them their heart would break'; **breke,** subjunctive.

4580. **men:** indefinite, 'somebody.'

4584. **he Jakke Straw:** in ME **he, him** are often used like demonstratives, meaning 'that famous, or notorious' so-and-so. The construction is not to be taken as apposition. Like some of his contemporaries (Knighton, II, 138), Chaucer seems to have thought that **Jack Straw** was a name assumed by Wat Tyler, the leader of the rebels in the insurrection at London in 1381. All contemporary accounts tell of the terror inspired by the insurgents; and we learn from Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana* (I, 462) and from Riley's *Memorials of London* (p. 450) that they slew many Flemings. It is curious that Chaucer nowhere else definitely mentions this notable event; but perhaps he missed its historic significance, and thought no more of it than some of us do of a great strike accompanied by rioting.

4620. **wynke:** in early English, **wynke** regularly means 'to shut the eye(s),' not 'to shut and open the eye.'

4632. *Romans,* xv, 4.

4633. Proverbial: Skeat quotes the *Testament* of Jean de Meun, one of the authors of *RR.*

4635. A note in several MSS explains that this refers to the Archbishop of Canterbury. But if the Prioress, the Nun, and the Priest came from Stratford-le-Bow, the ecclesiastical lord of the Priest was the Bishop of London; for the will of Elizabeth of Hainault, sister of Queen Philippa, who died a nun at Stratford in 1375, was probated in the court of the Bishop of London; see the will in Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 23–25.

[THE NUNS' PRIEST'S END-LINK (4637–52)]

In ten of the manuscripts the *Nuns' Priest's Tale* is followed by a passage of sixteen lines intended to connect it with some tale which was to follow. These lines, as given by MS Dd 4, 24, are:

Sire Nonnes Preest oure hoost seide a noon
I-blissed be thy breche and euery ston
This was a murie tale of Chauntecleer
But by my trouthe if thou were seculer
Thow woldest ben a tredfoul a-right
ffor if thou haue corage as thou hast myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
Ya moo than seuene tymes seuentene
Se which braunes hath this gentil Preest
So gret a nekke and swich a large breest
he loketh as a Sperhauke with hise eyen
him nedeth nat his colour for to dyghen
with brasile ne with greyn of Portyngale
Now sire faire falle yow for youre tale
And after that he with ful merie chere
Seide vn to a nother as ye shuln heere

The ten manuscripts containing these lines are Dd, Ds, En¹, Ad¹, En¹, Ma¹, Cn, Cx², Ch, and Ry¹. Four of the ten manuscripts (Ad¹, En³, Ma¹ and Ca) read **the Nunne** instead of **a nother** in l. 4652 and have six additional lines:

Madame and I durst I wolde you pray
To telle a tale in fortheryng of our way
Than might ye do vnto vs gret eese
Gladly sire quod she so that I myht pleese
You and this worthi company
And began hir tale riht thus fulle sobirly.

The six additional lines are surely spurious. Formerly I held that the first sixteen were patched together from the Host's words to the Monk (VII, 3114–52) early in the fifteenth century by some one who had caught the trick of Chaucer's verse. At present I am in doubt. It seems possible, if not probable, that Chaucer first wrote this passage for the Nuns' Priest and later decided to use the ideas for the Host's remarks to the Monk. Naturally, he then cancelled this passage; and so it does not appear in any of the MSS representing the latest status of *CT*. But as it had already got into circulation, some MSS have it.

FRAGMENT VIII (FURNIVALL'S GROUP G)

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE (1–553)

The tale of the Nun who accompanied the Prioress as her chaplain (I, 163–64) is recognized by all Chaucer scholars as being an earlier composition which Chaucer utilized with very little change for *CT*. The prologue with which it is provided does not serve to connect it in any way with the Canterbury journey, but only as an introduction to the tale itself. The clearest indication of the lack of revision is afforded by ll. 61–62:

> And though that I unworthy sone of Eve
> Be synful, yet accepte my bileve.

These lines are clearly inappropriate in the mouth of a woman.

It should be added that the text does not indicate who was the teller of the tale. The only evidence that Chaucer assigned it to the Nun is that of the headings of prologue and tale and the colophon in the MSS, but practically all of them agree in the assignment to the "Seconde Nonne." Brusendorff (p. 131) questions whether the assignment to her is due to Chaucer. Whatever one may think of this, it is probable that Chaucer had not formed any clear conception of the Second Nun or of the part to be played by her on the pilgrimage. Not only is the description of her lacking in the Prologue, but she is at no time represented as speaking or as being spoken to; cf. note on I, 163f.

The most interesting part of the Prologue consists of the three stanzas (ll. 36–56) translated from Dante's *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 1–18, with additions from some Latin hymn or prayer; cf. Lowes, *MPh*, XV, 193–202. The tone of both Prologue and Tale is one of deep religious feeling, and affords little support to those who believe Chaucer to have been seriously affected with tendencies resembling modern agnosticism; cf. Tupper, *MLN*, XXX, 9–11, and Carleton Brown, *ibid.*, 231f.

The Tale itself is a paraphrase, varying considerably in closeness, of the life of St. Cecilia as given in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine.

THE PROLOGE OF THE CHANONS YEMANNES TALE (554–719)

Those who assume, as editors commonly do, that all the extant tales belong to the journey from London to Canterbury, infer from ll. 555–56 and 588–89 that the pilgrims had spent the night at Ospringe, about forty-five miles from London; and that after they left their inn in the morning they were seen by the Canon and his Yeoman, who, recognizing the character of the party, were anxious to join it (cf. ll. 588–92). That the Canon also had an eye to the possibility of establishing profitable connections with some of the pilgrims may be inferred from the promptness with which the Yeoman begins to advertise his master's accomplishments (ll. 599–614). That Chaucer had from the beginning planned this incident cannot be proved, but is extremely prob-

able. There is no evidence of its being an afterthought. To have given any intimation in the "Prologue" that such an addition to the party was to occur would have been very bad art; cf. Kittredge, "The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale," *Trans. Roy. Soc. of Lit.*, XXX, 87ff. Some of those who have discussed Kittredge's view seem not to distinguish clearly between an afterthought and an incident planned from the first by the author but introduced as a surprise.

The general management of the episode is so skilful dramatically that there is little room for doubt that it belongs to the period of Chaucer's maturest art, yet there is one feature which seems to demand explanation. The Yeoman relates freely and in detail the story of his master's unsuccessful attempts to turn the baser metals into gold, and then volunteers to tell a story of similar experiences by another canon which differs very little in its essential outlines from that which he has just told about his master. In both tales the alchemist is described as a canon, and although ll. 839–40 indicate that men of the church were especially prone to the study and practice of alchemy, it would seem probable that Chaucer had some special motive for making his alchemist a canon in both instances. This motive is perhaps disclosed by an article by H. G. Richardson ("Year Books and Plea Rolls," *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, 1922, 4 Ser., V, 28–70). He produces from the Plea Rolls information about an alchemist who was a canon of Windsor, with whom Chaucer, as a member of the royal household and a frequent visitor to Windsor, was almost certainly acquainted. "William de Brumley, chaplain, later dwelling with the prior of Harmandsworth, was arrested by order of the King's Council with four counterfeit pieces of gold upon him. He expressly acknowledged that he had by the art of alchemy made these pieces from gold and silver and other medicines, to wit *sal armoniak*, *vitriol*, and *golermonik* [whatever that may be] . . . He said that he made the metal according to the teaching (*per doctrinam*) of William Shuchirch, Canon of the King's Chapel at Windsor." Richardson inquires whether William Shuchirch may not have been the canon whom Chaucer had in mind when he wrote "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale." Certainly Chaucer's intimate knowledge of the theories and processes of alchemy as displayed in the Prologue and Tale indicate either close association with some alchemist or an independent study of the subject, for which the motive can hardly have been the mere desire to obtain materials for a story. Loyalty to Chaucer as a man of good sense and judgment disinclines one to believe that he had himself been a devotee and a victim, but many men of equal eminence have yielded to the mysterious fascination of alchemy, and Chaucer's profound knowledge of both alchemy and astrology suggests that his temperament at least felt the attractions of pursuits beyond the border-line of conventional science.

It must be borne in mind that Chaucer lived at a time when the interest in alchemy was especially prevalent among scientific men and rulers. There is an incredible report that Raimon Lull visited England and made gold for Edward III, and an unconfirmed legend that Henry IV was a patron of alchemists. Charles VI of France is said to have attempted to use the services of Nicholas Flamel, one of the most famous alchemists of all time (cf. Schmieder, *Geschichte der Alchimie*, p. 196). The legend of Flamel is extremely picturesque.

In January, 1357, it is said, he bought for two crowns a MS written on bark. Not understanding the strange characters, he could make no use of it until 1378, when he visited Spain and found in Santiago a Christian Jew who could read them. He was now able to study the book, and on January 17, 1382, he for the first time turned quicksilver into silver and three months later twice turned the same metal into gold. His wealth rose to one and a half million livres. Having no children, he and his wife Peronelle devoted their wealth to charity. They endowed fourteen hospitals, built three chapels, and rebuilt seven churches (cf. Lenglet du Fresnoy, *Hist. de la Phil. Hermetique*, I, 206–17). His will was dated 1402, and he died in 1413, but there is a legend that he and his wife left Paris and lived in India until 1700.

555f. The village of Boughton is in the Blean Forest, about five miles from Ospringe.

573. Chaucer recognizes the principal one of the newcomers as a canon by his dress. The fact that his cloak was sewed to his hood apparently settled the problem of his order. There were several orders of canons. Some of them lived in separate establishments, much like those of the monks but observing a less strict code of rules; others belonged to the secular clergy and were attached to cathedrals and other large churches. Chaucer's Canon seems to have belonged to the latter class.

645. In the margin of El is written: "Omne quod est nimium &c." Here "&c" probably stands for 'vertitur in vitium.' Few doctrines of antiquity appealed more strongly to men of the Middle Ages than that which emphasizes moderation and the danger of "too much."

665. **Peter**; cf. note on III, 446.

669. **multiplye**, the technical term for transmuting baser metals into gold. In all these processes a small quantity of gold seems to have been necessary to start with; cf. 674ff.

688. **Caton**, the popular collection of proverbial wisdom known as *Dionysii Catonis Disticha de Moribus*. Chaucer here quotes from lib. i, dist. 17:

> Ne cures si quis tacito sermone loquatur;
> Conscius ipse sibi de se putat omnia dici.

The English version in the Vernon MS (*Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript*, EETS, p. 567) is as follows:

> Yif thou seo men speke stille,
> A-meoved beo thoŭ nougt:
> The wikked mon weneth that alle men
> Have him in heore thouht.

THE CHANONS YEMANNES TALE

724. The El picture so represents him. The poverty implied by this headdress is indicated in the proverb, "A man's a man though he have but a hose on his head."

745. El has in the margin "solacium miseriorum &c." In Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, II, i, 42, the proverb is quoted in the form: "Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris." This is the source of our "Misery loves company."

770ff. **Sublimation, amalgamation, calcination** are processes regularly met with in all the accounts of transmutation. Sublimation is vaporization by means of heat; amalgamation is mixing of metals to form a compound, especially of quicksilver, with other metals; calcination is the reduction of a metal to an oxide by the application of a slow heat in the presence of air. The processes of sublimation, descension, distillation (*per alembicum, per descensorium, et per filtrum*), calcination, solution, coagulation, fixion, and ceration are minutely described by Geber, whom Arnaldus de Villanova calls "magister magistrorum," in his *Summa Perfectionis Magisterii*, lib. 2 (*ap.* Manget, *Bib. Chem.*, vol. I).

774. **sublymed mercurie,** here apparently 'crude mercury which has been purified by sublimation.' But most alchemists warn their readers that none of the names of substances used in alchemy are to be taken in their ordinary meaning; the mercury, sulphur, arsenic, sal armoniak, etc., meant when these terms are used being not the ordinary substances but others known only to the initiated. This idea appears in almost all alchemical writings. In a Latin letter purporting to be addressed by Roger Bacon to a certain William of Paris, the recipient is expressly told that wise men in all ages have found it necessary to hide the great truths of science and philosophy from the world and to express them in such terms as can be understood only by those worthy to understand them. Among the various modes of concealment there enumerated the principal ones are: figurative language, the designation of substances by other names than their right ones, and the use of various forms of cipher or cryptography. This letter is printed at the end of Bacon's *Opera Minora* (ed. Brewer), and is an excellent example of the methods of concealment specified. Some scholars — wrongly, I think — regard it as written for the purpose of explaining in figurative language the method of making gunpowder; see the article on gunpowder in the *Encycl. Brit.*

775. The order of words is peculiar. We should say: **Our litarge** (protoxide of lead) **ground in porphyry** (i.e. a porphyry mortar).

778f. For the four spirits see ll. 822–24; the matters that remain fixed are apparently the seven bodies enumerated in ll. 825–29.

788ff. The Yeoman gives a long and disorderly list of substances, instruments, and processes; as if he had merely heard them talked about, but did not himself understand them. All of them were in common use in alchemy, but a full explanation of them would require a treatise. **bolle armonyak** is doubtless the substance called **golermonik** in the quotation given above from Richardson. Its real name was **bole Armeniac**, a kind of colored clay, supposed to come from Armenia, used in alchemy and in medicine. **verdegrees** is 'verdigris'; the name originally meant 'green of Greece.' It is the bibasic acetate of copper and is commonly produced where copper or brass is exposed to the action of air and water. For the **sondry vessels** see their names in the glossary.

797. The **rubifying** or rubification (reddening) of water and the **albification** (l. 805) were stages in preliminary processes, as also were the "incorporation of matters" (l. 815), the "citrination of silver" (l. 816) and the "cementing and fermentation" (l. 817).

813. **alum glas:** not 'alum and glass,' but 'rock alum.' A paragraph of Geber's *Liber Investigationis* is entitled "De Aluminis Glacialis vel Rochae praeparatione"; and his *Summa Perfectionis* speaks of **aluminibus vitris** (i, cap xi); see also Glossary.

825ff. One of the seven principal metals was ascribed to each of the seven planets, and the names of the planets are often used instead of the names of the metals. This is particularly true of sol (gold) and luna (silver).

838. **ascaunce,** 'as if'; an idiomatic expression, here equivalent to 'Perhaps you think.'

842. **elvysshe;** here and in l. 751 the word implies something uncanny, perhaps because of the traditional association of elves with the making of swords of supernatural qualities, an idea which goes back to ancient Germanic myth and legend.

853. **watres corosif,** 'acids.'

862f. The object of search of the alchemists was variously called, "the philosopher's stone," "the elixir," "the philosopher's egg," etc. Its properties were to heal diseases, to prolong life, and to change baser metals into silver and gold. It is not to be supposed that it necessarily had the form either of a stone or of an egg. When brandy was first produced by distillation it was thought by some that the elixir had been discovered, and it was accordingly called "aqua vitae" — see the *Book of Quinte Essence* (EETS) — and was regarded as the fifth essence, superior to the four elements of which all things were supposed to be made. Sometimes the elixir was in the form of a powder, a small portion of which would turn an enormous quantity of lead into gold. Many alchemists are reported to have made, or obtained, such a powder.

922ff. The Yeoman seems to pass from a generalized statement to a report of a particular incident, as is indicated by the tense of the verbs. **Long on,** 'due to,' 'because of,' is used frequently in Shakespeare in the same sense. Cf. *MND*, III, ii, 339.

962. In the margin of El is written, "Non teneas aurum &c." This is the beginning of one of the distichs of Alain de l'Isle, a twelfth-century writer whose *De Planctu Naturae* furnished some suggestions for Chaucer's *PF*. The distich referred to in the present passage is the first distich of the third chapter of the *Doctrinale Minus, alias Liber Parabolarum* (*Alani de Insulis Doctoris Universalis Opera Omnia*, ed. Migne, coll. 585–86):

> Non teneas aurum totum quod splendet ut aurum,
> Nec pulchrum pomum quodlibet esse bonum.

972–1481. The Yeoman's tale does not really begin until l. 972. Lines 720–971 were a sort of preamble, partly relating his experiences with his master

the Canon, but mainly composed of exposition and comment on alchemy. Chaucer's emphasis on the practice of alchemy by canons, and the care with which in ll. 992–1011 he attempts to free canons in general from blame in the matter, renders support to the view that he had in mind some particular experiences with a particular canon. Were it not for these facts, one would explain the choice of a canon as alchemist in the tale proper as due to the fact that the tale was really about the Yeoman's Canon but that the Yeoman did not wish to represent his master as so great a rascal. In the Preamble he had represented him rather as the dupe of his own pretences. The Yeoman does not tell us where the Canon lives. Line 1381 suggests that he did not live in London, which leaves all who have been favorably impressed by Mr. Richardson's suggestion that he was a canon of Windsor free to adopt that attractive suggestion.

1005. **by yow,** 'concerning you.'

1012. **preest annueleer,** a priest employed solely in singing annuals or anniversary masses for the dead. It is this practice against which Chaucer, Wyclif, the authors of *PP*, and other satirists protested so strongly, as depriving the parishes of the priests necessary for their care. Cf. note on I, 507ff.

1126. **mortifye,** 'kill'; the quick (or living) silver was supposed to be killed and made into ordinary silver. **Mortify** and **mortification** are common technical terms in alchemy applied to various changes of form.

1238–39. Several MSS have here two additional lines so Chaucerian in manner that they are usually admitted into the text:

'What, devel of helle, sholde it elles be?
Shavyng of silver silver is, parde!'

1244. **alle halwes,** gen. pl.

1313. Cf. I, 706, VII, 1630. Skeat says that to make a man one's ape is to lead him about at will, as street performers lead apes about. But the expression seems rather to mean 'make a fool of a man.'

1342. "As glad as a fowl of a fair day," Hazlitt, *Handbook of Proverbs*, p. 188.

1413. **Bayard,** 'a bay horse'; cf. note on III, 1563; made famous as the name of the bright bay horse given by Charlemagne to Renaud, one of the four sons of Aymond. In many proverbial sayings, the origin of which was forgotten, Bayard is the type of ignorant and reckless boldness; cf. *PP* (B), iv, 53, 124, vi, 196; *TC*, i, 218; etc.

1428ff. **Arnold of the Newe Toun** (Arnaldus de Villanova), a French scholar of the thirteenth century, was one of the most important figures in the history of medicine in the Middle Ages. Nine alchemical treatises ascribed to him are printed by Manget, *Bibl. Chemica*, I, 662–707. A full account of him is given in *Hist. litter. de la France*, XXVIII, 26–126. See also Lounsbury, II, 393. The proper title of Arnold's **Rosarie** is *Rosarium Philosophorum*. Lowes (*MLN*, XXVIII, 229) quotes a passage, of which ll. 1428–40 are a close translation. It comes, however, not from Arnold's *Rosarium*, but from his *De Lapide*

Philosophorum. The **Hermes** mentioned in l. 1434 is Hermes Trismegistus (thrice greatest) . . . This name was originally an honorific designation of the Egyptian god of wisdom, Thoth; but from the third century of our era it has been used for the supposititious writer of various mystical and alchemical writings. The expressions used in ll. 1431f. and 1435ff. are characteristic bits of alchemical jargon, and can all be paralleled in the treatise mentioned above. It will be remembered that both mystics and alchemists have expressed themselves purposely in figurative and often unintelligible terms in order that their wisdom might be concealed from the unworthy and understood only by the initiated; cf. note on l. 774.

1440. The alchemists called gold "sol" and silver "luna," and spoke of them as the father and mother of the elixir or philosopher's stone.

1447. There is a treatise entitled *Secreta Secretorum*, ascribed in the Middle Ages to Aristotle and supposed to contain a summary of human wisdom which he presented to Alexander the Great. English versions of it were published by the Early English Text Society (Extra Series, Numbers lxvi, lxxiv; a third volume is announced as in press). I do not think, however, that this passage refers to that book. It merely means that this is a secret par excellence.

1448–71. The anecdote here told of Plato and his disciple is related, with some variations, of Solomon in the alchemical treatise entitled *Senoris Zadith fil. Hamuelis Tabula Chemica* (*Theatrum Chemicum*, ed. 1613, V, 219, ed. 1650, p. 224). Tyrwhitt quotes the following passages: "Dixit Salomon rex, Recipe lapidem qui dicitur Thitarios (*sic*) . . . Dixit sapiens, Assigna mihi illum . . . Dixit, Est corpus magnesiae nobile . . . Dixit, Quid est magnesia? Respondit, Magnesia est aqua composita," &c. The treatise is full of phrases and ideas that appear in *CYT*. Plato's *Timaeus* is constantly named and cited as an authority by the alchemists; and there is a treatise entitled *Platonis Quartorum cum commento Hebuhabes Hamed: explicatus ab Hestole* (*Theat. Chem.* vol. V).

1457. **ignotum per ignotius,** 'an unknown thing by something more unknown.'

1460. All things were, according to ancient science, composed of the four elements — earth, air, fire, and water — but these terms were not used in their ordinary senses. It is easy to see how this theory that all things were composed of a few simple elements lent support to the idea that one substance could be transformed into another, and it is interesting to note that the modern theory that the so-called chemical elements are merely different arrangements of a single primal substance has revived interest in the transmutation of one substance into another.

1461. **rote,** the **radix** or root of a substance is its essential constituent.

1472–81. In *PMLA*, XXXIX, 782–88, S. F. Damon argues that Chaucer was not a victim of alchemy and a disbeliever in it, but an adept, who expressed his knowledge and belief in such terms as to reveal himself to his brother adepts. I can only say that his argument seems to me unconvincing.

FRAGMENT IX (FURNIVALL'S GROUP H)

THE PROLOGE OF THE MAUNCIPLES TALE (1–104)

1–104. This highly dramatic episode is in Chaucer's best realistic manner. Some scholars have been puzzled by the terms in which the Host calls on the Cook for a tale, as they seem to imply that he has not already told one. But if it was originally planned that each pilgrim was to tell a tale each day of a two-day journey, there is no difficulty — the Host would be calling for the tale of the second day.

2. **Bobbe up and doun.** This curious name is supposed to be a jocular designation of the village of Harbledoun, which is situated beside the Blean Forest between Boughton and Canterbury. J. M. Cowper, however, in a letter to *The Athenaeum* (see *Temporary Preface*, Chaucer Soc., p. 32) notes the existence of a place called Up-and-down Field, and believes it to be the place meant. If so, the old road must have differed from the present one; and this may have been the case.

5. **dun is in the myre;** a proverbial expression meaning that things are at a standstill and need help. A game called by this name, a sort of tug of war, was played with a heavy log of wood which represented "dun in the mire." For a full explanation see Gifford, *Works of Ben Jonson*, *VII*, 238, and cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 41. But I do not believe that the game is alluded to here.

9. **for cokkes bones;** a mild oath in which **cokkes** is used to avoid saying **Goddes,** as **gosh** is substituted for **God.**

14. **botel hey,** 'a small bundle of hay.' For the construction cf. § 112.

24. **Chepe,** 'Cheapside,' long famous for its taverns.

42. The Cook was apparently reeling in his saddle and was in poor condition to joust at the **fan,** or 'quintain.' This was a popular sport in which a crossbar turning on a pivot was placed at the top of a post. At one end of the crossbar was the fan, a board sometimes painted like a shield, and at the other a club or bag of sand. The jouster had to strike the shield and get out of the way of the stroke from the other end of the bar; cf. *As You Like It*, ii, 263, and Strut, *Sports and Pastimes of the English People*, bk. III, ch. 1.

44. **wyn ape,** 'ape's wine.' According to Talmudic tradition, when Noah planted the grape, Satan secretly poured about the roots the blood of a sheep, a lion, an ape, and a hog, with the result that men who drink too much of the juice of the grape come to resemble these animals in turn. The tale was widely known and much used in the Middle Ages.

51. The idea that a man should stick to his own job is proverbial.

72. A figure taken from the sport of hawking. A hawk that will not return to his master is reclaimed (brought back) by exhibiting a **lure** — a tempting

bit of food, or an artificial bird. Lines 76ff. show that the Manciple had been "grafting" on the purchases made for his masters of the Temple, and that the Cook could easily get even with him by revealing his practices.

82. The picture of the Manciple in El shows him with the gourd in his hand.

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE (105–362)

The Manciple tells a story of a crow that revealed to his master the unfaithfulness of his wife, and by a trick was punished for so doing. The story belongs to the type exploited by Rudyard Kipling in his series of *Just So Stories*, as it explains why the crow, which was originally snow-white, has become black. Chaucer seems to have got the story from Ovid, *Met*, ii, 531–550, but it exists in many versions and is ultimately of Oriental origin.

FRAGMENT X (FURNIVALL'S GROUP I)

THE PROLOGE OF THE PERSONS TALE (1–74)

This prologue seems to connect *McT* with *PT*; cf. l. 1. But the *McT*, which is a brief one, seems to have been told early in the morning, whereas the time indicated by the position of the sun (ll. 2–4), is four o'clock in the afternoon. By a singular error the best MSS — all the printed ones — have **ten** instead of **four** in l. 5. This is clearly an error, and was probably committed in order to harmonize the time of this tale with that of the Manciple when the Manciple's name was introduced into l. 1. The scribes, of course, did not understand that l. 2 clearly indicates some hour in the afternoon, when the sun has passed the meridian ("south lyne"), and that l. 4 fixes this hour as four o'clock. The errors can hardly have originated with Chaucer.

10f. A very puzzling passage. The exaltation of the Moon is in the third degree of the sign Taurus; the sign Libra is given by all authorities as the exaltation of Saturn; cf. James Wilson, *A Complete Dictionary of Astrology*, pp. 94–6; so also in *Libellus Ysagogicus Abdilazi*. (Erhardus Ratdolt, Venice, 1485) sig. aa 4. As the sign Libra was actually ascending at four P.M., Skeat suggested that **Mones** is an error for Saturnes. He further suggested that Chaucer's memory may have confused the terms "exaltation" and "face," as the first ten degrees of Libra were called "the moon's face."

On the expression **I mene Libra**, cf. "The signe I mene callid the lioun," English Title to the Crown of France (Wright, *Political Poems*, II, 139).

12. **at a thropes ende.** What village could this have been? The pilgrims had passed Boughton (VIII, 556) and Harbledown (IX, 2); and there was no village between the latter and Canterbury. Is it possible that Fragment X was intended to close up the journey back to Southwark? Despite l. 1, it does not join well with Fragment IX; and ll. 47 and 63 rather imply the end of the tale-telling. But there are difficulties.

22f. **vicary.** A vicar was, as the term implies, a substitute employed at a smaller salary to perform the services of a parish church in place of the parson, or rector.

25. This line might imply that each pilgrim was expected to tell only one tale, but the Host may have in mind only the tale of the last day of the outward journey.

42ff. The alliterative verse revived in the fourteenth century in such poems as *PP*, *Gawayne and the Grene Knyght*, etc. was especially characteristic of the North. Some writers have supposed Chaucer to be here poking fun at this form of verse, but the Parson is speaking in harmony with his character, and thinks quite as meanly of rhyme as he does of alliteration. He is motivating the telling of a prose tale.

57. **sentence,** 'meaning,' 'general idea.'

69–74. Obviously these lines are not in the proper order; ll. 69–70 should come last. As no extant MS has the proper arrangement, the error must have occurred in the copy from which all are derived. Lines 71–74 are probably an afterthought intended by Chaucer for insertion between l. 68 and l. 69. If they were written at the bottom of the page, with a reference mark to indicate where they belonged — a common practice with omissions and insertions — it is easy to understand how they were inserted at the wrong place by Chaucer's copyist.

The reader's interpretation of the insertion will depend upon whether he accepts the following treatise as the prose tale Chaucer intended to put in the mouth of the Parson.

THE PERSOUNS TALE (75–1080)

PT is not really a tale at all, and the characterization of it as **myrie** (l. 46), is comical. It is really a treatise on the seven deadly sins, and is little more than a paraphrase of a manual of confession.

I do not believe that one can refuse to admit the authenticity of this treatise and the accompanying retractions; but this by no means commits one to the conclusion that Chaucer intended them as parts of the *CT*. They may have been found in Chaucer's chest after his death, and, on the inadequate ground that they were in prose, have been falsely supposed to have been intended for use as the *PT*. In like manner we account for the presence of *Gamelyn* as the *CkT* in many MSS.

CHAUCER'S RETRACTIONS (1081–1092)

Many lovers of Chaucer have felt inclined to question his authorship of this passage in which he expresses his repentance for the composition of so many of his works. A principal reason for this feeling is the unwillingness to believe that even the tenderest conscience could have felt that there was anything wrong in several of the poems expressly mentioned as requiring forgiveness — *The House of Fame*, *The Legend of Good Women*, *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parlement of Foules*, or even the *Troilus and Creseyde*. Another reason is

perhaps the inaccuracy of the references to *The Legend of Good Women* as "the Book of the xxv Ladies," and to the "Book of the Leoun" (see notes on ll. 1086, 1087). The reference to "many another book if they were in my remembrance" is also suspicious. But the evidence of the MSS is altogether in favor of the authenticity of the passage, and Tatlock (*PMLA*, XXVIII, 521–29.) has shown that Chaucer had distinguished precedents for his retractions in St. Augustine, the Venerable Bede, Giraldus Cambrensis, Jean de Meun, Boccaccio, and others, and distinguished followers in Edmund Spenser, Robert Herrick, John Dryden, and others. Tatlock also refers in passing to the declaration made by Dr. Thomas Gascoigne (1403–1458) in his theological dictionary that Chaucer before his death bitterly repented of his writings: "Thus Chaucer before his death frequently cried out 'Woe to me, woe to me, because I can neither recall nor destroy those things which I sinfully wrote concerning the base and sinful love of men for women, and which now will be continually circulated among men'" (cf. Hales, *Folia Litteraria*, pp. 110ff). He might further have recalled the fact that Chaucer's friend Sir Lewis Clifford in his will (Nicolas, *The Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy*, II, 430f.) expressed the most abject remorse and repentance for a sin which seems to have consisted only in adherence to the doctrines of John Wyclif. The will of Clifford is so picturesque and his attitude so pertinent to the question of Chaucer's repentance that it seems worth while to quote the greater part of the preamble:

> In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen. The sevententhe day of September, the yere of our Lord Jesu Christ a thousand foure hundred and foure, I Lowys Clyfforth, fals and traytor to my Lord God, and to all the blessed company of Hevene, and unworthi to be clepyd a Cristen man, make and ordeyne my Testament and my last Will in this manere. At the begynning, I, most unworthi and Goddis traytor, recommaunde my wrechid and synfule soule hooly to the grace and to the grete mercy of the blessed Trynytie; and my wrechid careyne to be beryed in the ferthest corner of the chircheyerd in which pariche my wrechid soule departeth fro my body, and I prey and charge my survivors and myne executors, as they wollen answere tofore God, and as all myne hoole trust in this matere is in hem, that on my stinking careyne be neyther leyd clothe of gold, ne of silke, but a black clothe, and a taper at myne hed, and another at my fete, ne stone, ne other thinge whereby any man may witt where my stinkyng careyne liggeth.

It is to be borne in mind also that there is much evidence in his writings that Chaucer's emotions were always deeply affected by certain expressions of religion, and that the end of *TC* consists essentially of a "retraction" of that poem, written in a style which is unmistakably the poet's own. Whether his choice of a house in the precincts of Westminster Abbey in which to spend his last years was due to a desire to be more closely associated with men of religion may be left to the judgment of the reader. The Harvard portrait of Chaucer seems to show a man, not aged, but broken in health. Continued physical weakness and suffering might well have produced a state of mind which would account for the retractions, and possibly for the assignment to the

Parson of what is in no sense a tale, but merely a penitential treatise. The inaccuracies of the retractions may conceivably be due to their not being formally dictated by Chaucer, but written by some pious friend — perhaps a monk of Westminster — upon suggestions furnished by him.

1081. **litel tretys,** obviously referring to *PT*.

1083. **al that is writen** (II *Timothy*, iii, 16).

1086. **the book of the xxv ladies;** most MSS have **xxv,** Ln has **xv,** Ha^4 has **29.** Edward, duke of York, in the prologue to his translation, *The Master of Game* (ed. Baillie-Grohman, p. 2), written between the years 1406 and 1413, in referring to *LGW*, says: "as Chaucer saith in his prologue of 'the 25 (Shirley MS, xv) good women,' " but he may have been influenced by the passage in the retractions.

1087. **the book of the Leon.** Editors in general suppose this to be a translation, now lost, of Machaut's *Dit dou Leon*, but it may be doubted whether the character of this work would have induced Chaucer to translate it. As Arthur Gilman (Riverside ed., I, 445, *n* 7) saw in the Wife of Bath's query:

Who peyntede the leoun? Tel me who (III, 692)

a reference to Chaucer's *Book of the Lion*, it seems barely possible that some other readers of the Wife of Bath's query may have deduced from it the conclusion that Chaucer wrote a book of this title.

1092. **Qui cum patre** &c. Hg gives this benediction in full: **Qui cum deo patre et spiritu sancto vivis et regnas deus. Per omnia secula, Amen.**

GLOSSARY

Abbreviations Used in the Glossary. Besides the usual abbreviations for grammatical terms, the following occur: AF (Anglo-French); Du (Dutch); E (English); F (French); G (German); Gmc (Germanic); Icel (Icelandic); L (Latin); LL (Low Latin); ME (Middle English); MHG (Middle High German); NF (Norman French); Nth (Northern); OE (Old English); OF (Old French); OItal (Old Italian); OM (Old Mercian); ONF (Old Norman French); WS (West Saxon).

A

a, *prep.* (worn down fr. OE *an, on*), in

abaissen, *v.* (AF *abaissir*), abash, disconcert: **abayst,** *pp.*

abegge, *v.*, dial. form of **abyen**

a-blakeberyed, *false pp.* (cf. OE *blæcberie, f.*), a-blackberrying. See note on VI 406

aboght, *pp.*, **aboghte,** *pret. of* **abyen.** Cf. § 53

abregge, *v.* (OF *abregier, abreger*), abridge, shorten

abreyde, *v.* (OE *a* + *bregdan,* S III; but in Ch. also W I), move quickly, start

abroche, *v.* (OF *abrochier, abrocher*), broach

abrood, *adv.* (OE *on brād*), spread out

abusioun, *sb.* (OF *abusion*), ~~witcheraft~~

abyen, *v.* (OE *ābycgan,* W I), pay for

a-caterwawed, *false pp.* (some form of *cat,* perh. Du and G *kater,* male cat, + an onomatopoetic verb), a-caterwauling. See note on III 354

accident, *sb.* (OF *accident*), symptom, external sign, IV 607; unessential quality, VI 539

accomplice, *v.* (OF *acomplir, accompliss-*), accomplish, complete

achaat, *sb.* (OF *achat*), buying

achatour, *sb.* (AF *achatour*), buyer of provisions

acte, *sb.* (F *acte,* L *actus*), record, VII, 4326; deed, VI 574

adamaunt, *sb.* (OF *adamaunt*), adamant

Adoon, Adonis

adrad, *pp., adj.* (OM *on-drēdan,* WS *on-drǣdan,* S VII), afraid

Adriane, Ariadne

Adromacha, Andromache

affile, *v.* (OF *afiler*), smoothe

affray, *sb.* (OF *effrei*), disturbance

affraye, *v.* (AF *afrayer*), frighten

after-dinner, *sb.*, the time after dinner, IV 918

after-supper, *sb.*, the time after supper, IV 1219

agaste, *v.* (cf. OE *gǣstan,* W I), take fright

agayne, agayns, ayene, ayens, ayeyns, *prep.* (OE *ongean, -gen;* + *-es*), against, opposite, towards, facing, in the presence of; **agayn the eventyde,** towards evening; **agayn,** *adv.*, in reply, VI 717

agilten, *v.* (*a* + OE *gyltan,* W I), be guilty

agon, *pp., adj.* (OE *āgān*), gone, ago, past

a-grefe, agrief, *adv.* (*a-* + *grief*), ill

agryse, *v.* (OE *āgrīsan,* S I), shudder, fear

aiel, *sb.* (OF *aïel*), grandfather

aketon, *sb.* (OF *auqueton*), acton. See note on VII 2050–58

al, *adj.* (OM *al,* WS *eal*), all, every; **al a,** an entire; **alle and some,** each and all; *adv.*, altogether, entirely, very; **al newe,** lately; *conj.*, although; **al be,** although [it] be

alambike, *sb.* (OF *alambic,* Arabic *al* + Gk ἄμβιξ), alembic

alauntz, *sb., pl.* (OF *alant*), wolf hounds

alayes, *sb. pl.* (ONF *alay*), alloys
Alcione, Alcyone. See note on II 47–76
alder, *adj.* See **aller**
Aldrian, Aldiran, name of a star. See p. 135
alenge, *adj.* (OE *ālenge*), wearisome, tedious
ale-stake, *sb.* (OE *ealu, alu,* n., generally indec. in sg. + *staca,* m.). See note on I 666ff.
algate, algates, *adv.* (ME *alle* + *gate,* every way), at any rate, at all events, however that may be, entirely
Algezir, Algeciras, near Gibraltar, in the kingdom of Granada
Alisaundre, Alexandria, in Egypt
Alkaron, the Koran
allegge, *v.* (AF *alegier, alleger*), allege, affirm
aller, alder, alther, *adj., gen. pl.* (OE *ealra,* fr. *eall*), of all; **hir aller,** of them all; **oure aller,** of us all; **alderbest,** best of all; **alderfirst,** first of all; **aldernext,** next
allowe, *v.* (OF *alouer*), allow, commend, V 676
Almageste, *sb.* (OF *Almageste*), the name of a book by the famous astronomer Ptolemy. See note on I 3208
almesse, *sb.* (OE *ælmysse,* f.), charity
almest, *adv.* (OE *æl-māst*), almost
Alnath, name of a star. See V 1281
Alocen, Alhazen, an eleventh century Arabian astronomer and writer on optics
als, also, as, *adv., conj.* (OM *all swā,* WS *eall swā*), so; **al-so moote I thee,** so may I thrive; **al-so God my soule save,** so may God save my soul; **alswa** (Nth)
alther, *adj.* See **aller**
alum glas (L *alūmen* + E *glass*), crystallized alum
ambes as, *sb.* (OF *ambes as*), double aces. See note on II 124f.
amblere, *sb.* (OF *ambleüre*), pacer
ameve, *v.* (OF *amover*), move, be moved, show emotion; **noght ameved,** showed no emotion, IV 498
a-morwe, *adv.* (OE *on* + *morgen,* m.), in the morning
Amphioun, Amphion, king of Thebes
and, *conj.* (OE *and*), and, if
angle, *sb.* (F *angle*), angle; for astrological use see p. 142
anlaas, *sb.* (etym. obscure), dagger. See note on I 357
annueleer, *sb.* (cf. L *annus*), priest employed in singing anniversary masses
anoyen, *v.* (OF *anoier*), injure
antiphoner, *sb.* (OF *antiphonier*), anthem book
a-nyghtes, *adv.* (coalesc. of OE *on niht,* f. and *nihtes,* adverbial gen.), at night
apalled, appalled, *pp., adj.* (cf. OF *apalir*), pallid
apayed, *pp., adj.* (OF *apayer*), pleased
apert, *adv.* (OF *apert*), openly
apese, *v.* (OF *apeser*), settle
apeyren, *v.* (OF *ampeirer, empeirer,* with prefix reduced to *a-*), make worse, injure, damage
apiked, *pp., adj.* (cf. OE *pician,* W II), ornamented
appalled, see **apalled**
apparence, *sb.* (OF *aparence*), illusion
aprowours, *sb. pl.* (cf. OF *prou,* profit), agents, men who looked after his profit
arace, *v.* (AF *aracer*), tear away
araye, *v.* (AF *arayer*), array; arrange, VII 4227, V 910
archiwyfe, *sb.* (*archi-* + *wife,* fr. OE *wīf,* n.), big, strong women
areste, *v.* (OF *arester*), stop; **do arresten,** cause to be stopped, VII 4210
aretten, *v.* (OF *areter*), ascribe
arewe, *adv.* (OE *on* + OE *ræw* f.) in a row, one after another
argument, *sb.* (F *argument*), in astronomy the angle, arc, or other quantity upon which a calculation is based
Aries, a zodiacal sign. See p. 135
arist, *contracted 3 sg. pres.* fr. **ariseth**
ark, *sb.* (OF *arc*), astronomical term
armee, *sb.* (F *armee,* cogn. w. Sp. *armada*), armed expedition by sea or land
Armorik, Armorica, Brittany

armypotente, *adj.* (L *armipotentem, arma* + *potens*), powerful in arms
arn, are
array, *sb.* (AF *arai*), dress
arreest, *sb.* (OF *arest*), confinement, I 1310; **maad areest,** seized, VII 4090; **in arrest,** couched. See note on I 2602
arrerage, *sb.* (F *arrerage*), arrears
ars metrik, *sb.* (L *ars metrica,* a misunderstanding of *arismetica*), arithmetic
art, *sb.* (L *ars*), art: of love, I 476; arts course in the University, I 3191; training, I 4056
artificial, *adj.* (F *artificial*), astronomical term. See note on II 1ff.
artow, art thou
Artoys, Artois, a district in northeastern France
arwe, *sb.* (OE *arwe,* f.), arrow
as, *adv., conj.* (OM *all swā,* WS *eall swā*), as, so, as if; used as introductory particle with subj., **as mote I drynke,** so may I drink; **as helpe me the grete God,** so may the great God help me; *with imp.,* **as beth,** pray be; **as preith hire,** do pray her; **as now,** at present; **as for,** for; **as of,** as for; **as by,** according to
ascaunces, *conj. adv.* (etym. obscure; cf. ODu *quantsuys, quansîs*), as if
ascendent, *sb.* (OF *ascendant*), astronomical term. See p. 139
aslake, *v.* (OE *āslacian,* W II), assuage
aspect, *sb.* (L *aspectus*), astrological term. See p. 140
assay, *sb.* (OF *assai*), test; **in greet assay,** to a severe test, IV 1138
assaye, *v.* (OF *assaier*), test
assege, *v.* (OF *asegier*), besiege
assoillyng, *sb.* (cf. OF *assoilier*), absolution
asterte, *v.* (*a-* + *sterte*), escape
astonie, *v.* (OF *estoner*), astound; **astonyed,** *pret.;* **astoned, astonied,** *pp.*
astored, *pp., adj.* (OF *estorer*), supplied
astrelabie, *sb.* (OF *astrilabe,* star taking), astrolabe. See note on I 3209
astrologien, *sb.* (OF *astrologien*), astrologer
aswowne, *adv.* (cf. OE pp. *geswogen*), in a swoon
at, *prep.* (OE *æt*), at, in, by, for, to, of: **hunte at,** hunt, VII 1926; **at me,** of me, IV 653; **at me,** with regard to me, VII 1975
atake, *v.* (OE *a-* + *take*), overtake
atanes, *adv.*, dial. for **at ones**
atazir, *sb.* (Arabic *al* + *tasir,* influence) astrological term. See note on II 305
aton, *adv.* (OE *æt* + *ān*), at one
atones, *adv.* (OE *æt* + *ānes*), at once
at-rede, *v.* (OE *æt* + *rēdan,* W I), surpass in counsel
at-renne, *v.* (OE *æt* + ON *renna*), outrun
attame, *v.* (OF *atamer*), enter upon
atte (OE *æt þām*), at the
attempree, *adj.* (OF *atempre*), temperate, moderate
Atthalaunte, Atalanta
atthamaunt, *sb.*, bad spelling of **adamaunt**
Attheon, Actaeon
atwo, *adv.* (OE *on* + *twā*), in two
auctor, *sb.* (L *auctor*), author
auctoritee, *sb.* (F *auctorite*), authority
audience, *sb.* (F *audience*), hearing; audience, IV 790
augrym-stones, *sb. pl.* (OF *augorime* + OE *stān,* m.), counters. See note on I 3210
Augustyn, St. Augustine
auntrous, *adj.* (OF *aventuros*), adventurous
Austyn, St. Augustine
auter, *sb.* (OF *auter*), altar
avalen, *v.* (OF *avaler,* fr. *a val,* L, *ad vallem*), take off
avance, *v.* (OF *avancer*), benefit
avaunt, *sb., v.* (cf. OF v. *avanter*), boast
avauntour, *sb.* (OF *avantour*), boaster
aventaille, *sb.* (AF *aventail*), aventail. See note on IV 1204
aventure, *sb.* (OF *aventure*), chance
avision, *sb.* (OF *avision*), dream
avow, *sb.* (cf. OF v. *avouer*), vow
avowtrie, *sb.* (OF *avouterie*), adultery
avoy, *interj.* (OF *avoy*), exclamation of surprise or remonstrance

avys, *sb.* (OF *avis*), deliberation, opinion

avysen, *v.* (OF *aviser*), consider (usually reflex.); **avysed,** *pp.*, *adj.*, careful, VI 690

await, *sb.* (OF *await*), watch; **in await,** in ambush, VII 4415

axe, *v.* (OE *āscian, āxian*, W II), ask

ayene, ayens, ayeyns, *prep.* See **agayne**

B

ba, *v.* (prob. nursery word imitating a baby's kiss; but cf. OF *baer*, to open the mouth), kiss

baar, *pret. of* **beren.** See § 64

Babilan, *adj.*, Babylonian

bacheler, *sb.* (OF *bacheler*), candidate for knighthood; **bacheler of lawe,** one who has taken the first degree in law

bachelrye, *sb.* (OF *bachelerie*), young men, candidates for knighthood

Bacus, Bacchus

baite, *v.* (cf. ON *beita*, OE *bǣtan*, F *beter*), feed

balaunce, *sb.* (F *balance*, L *bilanx*, two-scaled), balance; **leye in balaunce,** wager, VIII 611

balke, *sb.* (OE *balca*, m.), beam of wood

balled, *pp.*, *adj.* (etym. uncertain), bald

ban, *sb.* (OE *bān*, n.), bone (Nth)

bane, *sb.* (OE *bana*, m.), cause of death

bareyne, *adj.* (OF *baraigne*, f.), barren

bargayne, *sb.* (OF *bargaine*), financial deal

barge, *sb.* (OF *barge*), a sailing vessel (in size between the carrack or great ship and the ballinger or sloop)

barm, *sb.* (OE *bearm*, m.), bosom, lap

barmcloth, *sb.* (OE *bearm*, m. + *clāþ*, m.), apron

barres, *sb. pl.* (OF *barre*), bars, i.e. ornamental transverse bands on a girdle

batailled, *adj.* (OF *bataillié*), battlemented

bathe, *adj. pl.* (apparently ON *báðir*), both (Nth)

baude, *sb.* (etym. uncertain), bawd

bauderie, *sb.* (OF *bauderie*), mirth, jollity, I 1926

baudy, *adj.* (of unknown origin), dirty

bawderye, *sb.* (*bawd* + *-ry;* not fr. F *bauderie*, mirth), pandering, D 1303

bawdryk, *sb.* (cf. OF *baudrei*, MHG *balderich*, perh. fr. L *balteus*), baldric

Bayard, a common name for a horse; originally, a bay horse

beaute, *sb.* (OF *beauté*), beauty

bede, *v.* (OE *bēodan*, S II), offer

bede, *pret. pl. and pp. of* **bidde.** See § 67

bedes, *sb. pl.* (OE *bedu*, n., pl., prayers), beads. See note on I 159

bedrede, *adj.* (OE *bedreda*, fr. *bed*, n. + *rida*, m., rider), bed-ridden

beel amy (F *bel ami*), good friend. See note on VI 318

been, *sb. pl.* (OE *bēo*, f., pl., *bēon*) bees

beer, *pret. of* **beren.** See § 64

beere, *sb.* (WS *bǣr*, OM *bēr*, f.), bier

beest, best, *sb.* (OF *beste*), animal

beete, *v.* (OE *bētan*, W I), mend

beggestere, *sb.* (*beg*, of obscure etym., + *-stere*), female beggar

behette, *pret. of* **behote**; promised

Belmarye, Benamarin, a Moorish kingdom in North Africa

beme, *sb.* (OM *bēmi*, WS *bieme*, *bȳme*, f.), trumpet

benedicite, *interj.* (L imper. pl. of *benedicere*). See note on II 1170–83

Beneit, Benedict

bent, *sb.* (OE *beonet-*), slope, hillside

berd, berd make, deceive. See note on I 4096

bere, *sb.* (OE *bera*, m.), bear

beren, *v.* (OE *beran*, S IV), bear, carry, conduct one's self (reflex.); **beren . . . on honde,** accuse, III 226

bersten, bresten, *v.* (OE *berstan*, Gmc. *brestan*, S III), burst

best. See **beest**

bet, *adj.*, *adv. comp.* (OE *bet*), better; **the bet,** the better; **go bet,** go at once

beten, *v.* (OE *bētan*, S VII), beat

beye, *v.* (dial. form of **bye**), buy VI 845

bibledde, *pp.* (*be-* + OE *blēdan*, W I), covered with blood

bicched, *pp.*, *adj.* (etym. unknown), cursed; **bicched bones two,** cursed dice

bidaffed, *pp.* (etym. uncertain), befooled

bifalle, *v.* (OE *befeallan*, S VII), befall, happen

bifore, biforne, *adv.*, *prep.* (OE *biforan*), before, in front of, in the front, first, formerly

bigon, *pp.*, *adj.* (OE *be* + *gān*, cf. § 92), beset; **wo bigon,** utterly distressed; **wel bigon,** happy

biheete, *1 sg. pres. of* **bihote.** See § 77

biheste, *sb.* (OE *behǣs*, f.), promise

bihighte, *pret. of* **bihote.** See § 77

bihote, *v.* (OE *behātan*, S VII), promise; **biheete,** *pres.*, VIII 707; **behette, bihighte,** *pret.*

bijape, *v.* (cf. *sb.*, **jape**), trick

biknowe, *v.* (OE *bicnāwan*, S VII), confess

birafte, *pret. of* **bireve**

bireve, *v.* (OE *birēafian*, W II), rob

biseke, *v.* (OE *bi-* + *sēcan*, W I), beseech

bisette, *v.* (OE *bisettan*, W I), employ

biseye, *pp.* (OE *bisēon*, S V), attired; **yvel biseye,** ill attired; **richely biseye,** richly attired

bismare, *sb.* (OE *bīsmer*, *-or*, n.), scorn

bismotered, *pp.*, *adj.* (etym. uncertain; cf. **smoterlich** and mod. *smut*), soiled

bistad, *pp.*, *adj.* (*bi-* + *stead*, OE, *stēde*, m.), endangered

bisynesse, *sb.* (OE *bisiġu*, adj.), business, care, diligence, occupation; **doon hire bisynesse,** take pains, exert herself

bit, *3 sg. pres. of* **bidde.** See § 80

bitake, *v.* (*bi-* + late OE *tacan*, S VI; cf. Icel *taka*), commit to

biteche, *v.* (OE *bitǣcean*, W I), give over to

bitore, *sb.* (OF *butor*), bittern

bitrayse, *v.* (*bi-* + *traïss-* lengthened stem of F *trahir*), betray

biwreye, biwrye, *v.* (*bi-* + *wreien*, OE, *wrēgan*, W I), reveal, betray

blankmanger, *sb.* (OF *blanc manger*, white food), chicken stewed with milk, eggs, rice, almonds, and sugar

Blee, Blean Forest

blenche, *v.* (OE *blencan*, W I), start back; **bleynte,** *pret.*

blende, *v.* (OE *blĕndan*, W I), blind

blere, *v.* (OE *blerian*, W II), to throw dust in the eyes of; **blerynge,** *sb.*, hoodwinking

bleynte, *v. pret. of* **blenche**

blondren, *v.* (cf. ON *blunda*, daze), flounder

blyve, *adv.* (ME *bilife*), quickly

bobance, *sb.* (OF *bobance*), boast

Bobbe-up-and-doun, Harbledown, near Canterbury

bode, *sb.* (OE *bod*, n., chiefly Nth, for *gebod*), omen

bode, *v.* (OE *bodian*, W II), forebode

boden, *pp. of* **bede.** See § 57

Boece, Boethius

boes, *v. 3 sg. pres. impers.*, Nth contr. fr. *behoves* (OE *bi-*, *behofian*), it behooves

Boesse, Boethius

boghte, *pret. of* **bye.** See § 53

Boghton under Blee, Boughton-under-Blean

boidekyn, *sb.* (etym. unknown), dagger

boistously, *adv.* (etym. uncertain), rudely, roughly

bokeler, *sb.* (OF *bocler*), buckler

bole, *sb.* (cf. ON *bole*, *boli*), bull

Boloigne, Boulogne in France, A 465; Bologna, in Italy, E 589

bomble, *v.* (echoic; cf. *boom*, *bum*), boom

bon, *sb.* (OE *bān*, n.), bone; **by corpus bones.** See note on VI 314

bond, *pret. of* **binden.** See § 61

bontee, *sb.* (OF *bontet*), excellence, virtue, munificence

boole armonyak. See note on VIII 788ff.

boone, *sb.* (ON *bōn*), prayer, request

boos, *sb.* (OF *boce*), boss of shield

boote, *sb.* (OE *bōt*, f.), remedy, help

bord, *sb.* (OE *bord*, n.), table

bore, *pp. of* **beren.** See § 64
borel, burel, *adj., sb.* (OE *burel,* fr. *bure,* coarse), lay, VII 3145; unlearned, V 716; *sb.,* coarse woolen clothes, III 356
borwe, *sb.* (OE *borh,* m.), surety; **seint John to borwe,** Saint John as my surety
botel, *sb.* (OF *botel*), bundle
bouk, *sb.* (OE *būc,* m.), belly
bour, *sb.* (OE *būr,* n.), chamber, inner room
bourde, *sb.* (OF *bourde*), jest
bourde, *v.* (OF *bourder*), jest
bown, *adj.* (ON *buinn,* early Nth *bun*), ready
box, *sb.* (OE *box,* m? n?, L, *buxus*), box tree, A 2922; boxwood, VII 4588
boyste, *sb.* (OF *boiste*), box, casket
bracer, *sb.* (OF *brasseüre,* infl. by *brassard*), wrist guard in archery
Bradwardyn, Bishop Thomas Bradwardine. See note on VII 4424–40
bragot, *sb.* (Welsh *bragawd*), bragget, a drink made of honey and ale fermented together
brast, *pret. of* **bersten.** See § 60
brawen, brawn, *sb.* (OF *braoun*), brawn, muscle, flesh
brede, *sb.* (OE *brādu,* f. indecl.), breadth
breem, *sb.* (OF *bresme*), bream, a fresh water fish
brembul, *sb.* (OE *brembel, bræmbel,* m.), bramble, dog rose
breme, *adv.* (cf. OE *brēme*), fiercely, furiously (app. Nth in this sense)
bren, *sb.* (OF *bren*), bran
brennen, *v.* (ON *brenna*), burn
bresten. See **bersten**
bretful, *adj.* (cf. Scand *bräddful*), brimful
bretherhede, *sb.* (OE *brĕðer,* pl. of *broðer,* m. + **-hād,* condition, state), brotherhood, fraternity
breyde, *v.* (OE *bregdan,* S III), start, draw (in Chaucer W I)
Brixseyde, Briseis
Brok, Brock, a horse's name
brooch, *sb.* (F *broche*), brooch, ornament
broste, *pret. pl. of* **bresten.** See § 60
brouke, *v.* (OE *brūcan,* S II), keep
browdynge, *sb.* (cf. F v. *brouder*), embroidery
broyden, *pp., adj.* (OE *bregdan,* S III, twist; doublet of *browden* the normal development of *brogden*), embroidered
brybe, *v.* (origin doubtful), rob, steal
brynges, *3 sg. pres. for* bringeth (Nth)
bugle-horn, *sb.* (OF *bugle* + OE *horn,* m.), horn of a wild ox. See note on V 1253
bukke, *sb.* (OE *bucca,* m.), buck
bulle, *sb.* (L *bulla*), the papal bull, the leaden seal attached or the edict itself
bulte, *v.* (OF *bulter*), sift
bulte, *pret. of bulden* (OE **byldan*), built
Burdeuxward, the direction of Bordeaux
burdoun, *sb.* (OF *bourdon*), bass accompaniment
burel. See **borel**
burgeys, *sb.* (OF *burgeis*), citizen
burne, *v.* (OF *burnir*), burnish
busk, *sb.* (ON *būska*), bush (Nth)
but, *adv., conj.* (OE *butan*), but, but if, only, unless
but-if, *conj.* (*but* + *if*), unless
buxomly, *adv.* (cf. OE v. *būgan,* S II), obediently
buxumnesse, *sb.,* obedience
by, *prep.* (OE *bi, be*), by, at, with respect to; **by the morwe,** in the morning
bye, *v.* (OE *bycgan,* W I), buy, pay for; **boghte agayn,** redeemed

C

cake, *sb.* (ON *kaka*), round, flattened loaf of bread
Calistopee, Callisto. See note on I 2056
calle, *sb.* (F *cale*), netted head-dress
camaille, *sb.* (ONF *cameil,* L *camelus*), camel
Cambyuskan, Gengis Khan. See note on V 12
camuse, kamuse, *adj.* (F *camus, -use*), pug

Canacee, Canace. See note on II 77–89

canon, *sb.* (L *canon*). See note on VI 887ff.

Cantebregge, Cantebrigge, Cambridge

cantel, *sb.* (ONF *cantel*), portion

cappe, *sb.* (OE *cæppe*, f., L *cappa*), cap; **sette hir aller cappe,** made dupes of them all

Capricorn, a zodiacal sign. See p. 135

capul, *sb.* (cf. Icel *kapall*, Ir *capall*, *capull*, prob. fr. L *caballus*), cart horse; *pl.*, **caples**

cardynacle, *sb.* (OF *cardiaque*), pain at the heart. See note on VI 313

careful, *adj.* (OE *carful*, fr. *caru*, f. + *-ful*), sorrowful

careyne, *sb.* (ONF *caronie*, *caroine*), dead body

carf, *pret. of* **kerve.** See § 60

carl, *sb.* (ON *karl;* OE cognate *ceorl*, m.), fellow

carole, *sb.* (OF *carole*), carol, a dance accompanied by singing

carpe, *v.* (Icel *karpa*), talk

Cartage, Carthage; Cartagena, in Spain, I 404

cas, *sb.* (OF *cas*), case, chance, occasion, circumstance, condition; **caas, par cas,** by chance

cast, *sb.* (cf. **casten,** *v.*), cast, artifice, fortune; **castes,** *pl.*, strokes of ill fortune

casten, *v.* (ON *kasta*), cast, throw, conjecture, consider, plan; **casten hem,** *pret. pl.*, planned

casuelly, *adv.* (F *casuel* + *-ly*), accidentally

catel, *sb.* (OF *catel*), personal property

Caton, Cato

caytyf, *adj.* (ONF *caitif*, captive), wretched, miserable; *also sb.*, wretch

ceint, *sb.* (OF *ceint*), girdle

celerer, *sb.* (OF *celerier*), cellarer, officer of a monastery who had charge of provisions

celle, *sb.* (OF *celle*), subordinate monastery. See note on I 172

centaure, *sb.* (LL *centaurea*), centaury, a medicinal plant

centre, *sb.* (F *centre*), astronomical term. See p. 136

cereal, *adj.* (OItal *cereale*, fr. *cerro*), of evergreen oak

ceriously, *adv.* (LL *seriose*, used as adv. fr. *series*), in detail

certes, *adv.* (OF *certes*), certainly, assuredly

certeyn, *adj.* (F *certain*), certain, sure; **in good certayn,** in good certainty; **a certeyn yeres,** a certain number of years; **a certeyn of,** some

certres, *error for* **sterres.** See note on I 2037

ceruce, *sb.* (F *ceruse*), carbonate of lead

cetewale, *sb.* (OF *citoual*), zedoary, a plant of the ginger family

Ceys, Ceyx. See note on II 47–76

chaar, *sb.* (F *char*), chariot

chaffare, *sb.* (OE *cēap*, m. + *faru*, f.), business, trade; *also v.*

chalange, *v.* (OF *chalangier*), claim

chalons, *sb. pl.* (app. fr. *Chalons*, the place of manufacture), blankets

chamberere, *sb.* (OF *chamberier*, f. *chambriere*), chambermaid

champartie, *sb.* (cf. OF *champart*), partnership

chanon, *sb.* (F *chanoine*), canon, a member of a religious order less strict than the monastic. See note on VII 573

chaped, *pp.* (cf. L *capa*), mounted

chapeleyne, *sb.* (OF *chapelain*, m.), chaplain. See note on I 164f.

chapitre, *sb.* (L *capitulum*), chapter, the assembly of diocesan officials

chapman, *sb.* (OE *cēapmonn*, m.), merchant. See note on I 397

chapmanhode, *sb.* (cf. **chapman**), trade

charbocle, *sb.* (OF *charbucle*, *-boucle*), carbuncle

charge, *sb.* (F *charge*), care; **if it be in his charge,** if he be responsible, I 733; **no charge,** no matter

chartre, *sb.* (OF *chartre*, L *cartula*, small paper), legal document, deed

chasten, *v.* (OF *chastier*), discipline

chasteyn, *sb.* (OF *chastaine*), chestnut tree

chaunce, *sb.* (OF *cheance*), chance, luck: a technical term in the game of hazard, II 125, VI 653; **per-chaunce,** I 475; **par chaunce,** VI 606, by chance

chauntrie, *sb.* (OF *chanterie*), chantry, a chapel or altar endowed to maintain one or more priests to sing daily mass for the souls of the founders or others

chayer, *sb.* (OF *chaiëre*), professor's chair, III 1518

cheere, chiere, *sb.* (OF *chere, chiere,* L *cara*), countenance, look, appearance, mirth, show, sign

Chepe, Cheapside, one of the principal streets in old London

chepe, *sb.* (OE *cēap,* m.), market, bargain; **to great cheep,** too good a bargain, III 523

chepe, *v.* (OE *cēapian,* W II), bargain, come to terms with

cherl, *sb.* (OE *ceorl,* m.), churl, fellow. Cf. **carl**

chese, *v.* (OE *cēosan,* S II), choose; **chese he,** *pres. subj.*, let him choose

chesynge, *sb.* (OE *cēosung,* f.), choosing

chevyssaunce, *sb.* (OF *chevisaunce*), borrowing, lending, dealing for profit

chichivache (perversion of NF *chichefache*). See note on IV 1188

chiere. See **cheere**

chiertee, *sb.* (OF *chierte*), love, affection

child, *sb.* (OE *cild,* n.), child; sir (see note on VII 2000)

chirche-reve, *sb.* (OE *cĭrce,* f. + *rēaf,* n.) church ~~robbery~~ reeve, warden

chirken, *v.* (onomatopoetic; cf. *chirk, chirp, chirr*), chirp

chirkyng, *sb.* (v. var. of *chark,* OE *cearcian,* W II), chirping; creak, I 2004

chivalrie, *sb.* (F *chevalerie*), chivalry, knighthood; chivalric ideals, I 45; a body of knights, II 235

chymbe, *sb.* (cf. Du *Kim,* MhG *Kimme*), projecting rim at the ends of a cask

chymbe, *v.* (origin obscure), chime

chyvachee, chyvachie, *sb.* (OF *chevauchie*), raid by body of knights and their retainers ; H 50 expedition

Cipion, Scipio

cipre, *sb.* (OF *cipre*), cypress

cipress, *sb.* (OF *cipres*), cypress

Citheron, Cithæron; cf. note on I 1936

citole, *sb.* (OF *citole*), citole, a stringed instrument, somewhat like a zither

citryn, *adj.* (F *citrin*), greenish-yellow

clamb, *pret. of* **clymben.** See § 62

clappe, *sb.* (cf. MDu *clap*[*p*]), noisy talk

clappe, *v.* (OE **clappian,* W II), chatter

clappyng, *sb.* (cf. sb. **clappe**), chatter

claree, *sb.* (OF *clare*), drink of wine, honey, and spices

clarion, *sb.* (OF *clairon*), a small high-pitched trumpet

clause, *sb.* (OF *clause*), sentence; **in a clause,** briefly

cleere, *adj.* (OF *cler*), bright, beautiful, noble; also *adv.*

clene, *adj.* (OE *clǣne*), clean, pure; *adv.*, thoroughly, completely

clennesse, *sb.* (OE *clǣnnes,* f.), cleanness, purity

clepen, *v.* (OE *cleopian,* W II), call, name

clergeon, *sb.* (OF *clerjon,* dim. of *clerc*), see note on VII 1685

clerk, *sb.* (L *clericus,* OE and OF *clerc*), one admitted to any of the eight religious orders, scholar, ecclesiastic

clobbed, *adj.* (cf. ON *klubba*), club-shaped

clomben, *pp. of* **clymben.** See § 62

clos, *sb.* (F *clos,* L *clausum*), yard

clote-leaf, *sb.* (OE *clāte,* f. + *leāf,* m.), burdock leaf

clout, *sb.* (OE *clūt,* m.), rag

clowe-gylofre, *sb.* (F *clou de gilofre*), spice clove

cloysterer, *sb.* (OF *cloistrier*), dweller in a cloister. See note on I 259

clymben, *v.* (OE *climban,* S III), climb

cod, *sb.* (OE *codd,* m.), bag, stomach

cofre, *sb.* (OF *cofre*), chest

cokewold, *sb.* (OF *cucuault*, earlier **cucuald*), cuckold

cokkes bones, God's bones. See note on IX 9

cold, *adj.* (OM *cald*, WS *ceald*), cold, fatal, disastrous

colde, *v.* (cf. *adj.* **cold**), grow cold

colera, colere, *sb.* (LL *colera*), bile. See note on I 333

colerik, *adj.* (F *cholerique*, L *choleri-cus*), bilious, hot-tempered. See **colera**

colfox, *sb.* (OE *col-* + *fox*, m.; cf. G *kohlfuchs*), a species of fox described in VII 4092–94

collacion, *sb.* (OF *collation*), conference

Colle, nickname for Nicolas

collect, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. OF *collecter*), astronomical term. See p. 136

colour, *sb.* (OF *colour*), color; excuse, III 399; **colours,** *pl.*, fine phrases, IV 16, V 39, 511, 723, 726

colpon, *sb.* (OF *colpon*), strip, bundle

coltes tooth (OE *colt*, m. + *tōð*, m.), colt's tooth, i.e. youthful passions

commune, *sb.* (OF *commune*, LL *communa*), common people; *adj.* common, general

compas, *sb.* (F *compas*), circle; **trine compas,** VIII 45, the threefold world, earth, sea, and land

compassing, *sb.* (cf. F *compasser*, measure), artifice

compeer, compier, *sb.* (OF *comper*), comrade

compleccion, complexion, *sb.* (F *complexion*), temperament. See note on I 333

compleyne, *v.* (F *complaindre*, *complaign-*), lament

compleynte, *sb.* (F *complainte*), lament. See note on V 948

composicion, *sb.* (F *composition*), agreement; **composicions,** combinations. See note on V 229

comyn, *sb.* (OF *comin*, OE *cymen*, m., n.), cumin, an eastern plant formerly cultivated for its spicy seeds

conclusion, *sb.* (F *conclusion*), purpose; **conclusiouns,** exercises, I 3193

condescende, *v.* (F *condescendre*), come to

condicion, *sb.* (OF *condicion*), nature; character, II 271; rank, II 312; **al the condicion,** all the characteristics, I 38

condicioneel, *adj.* (OF *condicionel*), conditioned

confiture, *sb.* (F *confiture*), mixture of drugs

confus, *pp.*, *adj.* (OF *confus*), confused, perplexed

conjure, *v.* (OF *conjurer*), entreat

conseil, *sb.* (OF *conseil*), counsel, advice, secret, opinion; confidant, I 1147

constable, *sb.* (OF *constable*), governor

constellacion, *sb.* (OF *constellation*), astronomical term. See note on V 129ff.

contek, *sb.* (AF *contek*), strife

contenance, *sb.* (OF *contenance*), countenance, appearance, demeanor, behavior, show

convenient, *adj.* (cf. L *convenientem*), suitable, commensurate; **convenientz,** *pl.*

convoyen, *v.* (OF *convoier*), convey

cope, *sb.* (OE *cop*, m.), top

cope, *sb.* (LL *capa*), cope, a long mantle worn by priests

coppe, *sb.* (OE *cuppe*, f.), cup; **turne coppes.** See note on I 3928

corage, *sb.* (OF *corage*), courage, heart, spirit, nature, desire, inclination

cordewane, *sb.* (OF *cordewan*, fr. *Cordova*), cordwain, Spanish leather, used for fine shoes

corn, *sb.* (OE *corn*, n.), grain; **cornes,** crops of grain

corny, *adj.* (*corn*, n. + *-y*), tasting strongly of corn or malt

corone, coroune, corowne, *sb.* (AF *coroune*), crown

coroune. See **corone**

corouned, *adj.* (OF *coroné*, *corunê*), consummate, V 526

corpus, cors, *sb.* (L *corpus*), body;

corpus dominus (for *corpus domini*), body of the Lord; **corpus Madrian,** body of [St.] Madrian; **corpus bones,** a confused oath (cf. note on II 1189)

corrumpable, *adj.* (OF *corrumpable*), corruptible

cors. See **corpus**

corven, *pp. of* **kerve.** See § 60

cost, *sb.* (OF *coste*), coast, VII 1626, V 995

costage, *sb.* (AF *costage*), cost, expense

cote, *sb.* (OE *cot,* n. *cote,* wk. f.), cottage, shed; cell, I 2457

cote, *sb.* (OF *cote*), coat, gown

cote-armure, *sb.* (OF *cote armure*), coat-armor. See note on I 1016

couche, *v.* (OF *coucher*), lay, set, crouch; **couched,** *pp.,* I 3211

coude, *pret. of* **konne.** See § 91

countour, *sb.* (AF *contour*), legal representative, or perhaps accountant. See note on I 359

countrefete, *v.* (F *contrefaire*), imitate. See note on I 139

countretaille, *sb.* (OF *contretaille*), counter tally; **at the countretaille,** in reply. See note on IV 1190

cours, *sb.* (OF *cours*), course; the practice of coursing or pursuing game with hounds; orbit, course of a planet. See p. 134

courser, *sb.* (OF *corsier*), a war horse lighter and swifter than a **dextrer,** q. v.

courtepy, *sb.* (MDu *korte pie*), short coat of coarse material

covent, *sb.* (L *coventus*), convent

coverchief, *sb.* (OF *cuvrechef, couvrechief*), kerchief, head covering

covyne, *sb.* (OF *covine*), collusion, trickery

coy, *adj.* (F *coi*), quiet, modest

crabbed, *adj.* (fr. OE *crabba*), crabbed, perverse

cracchynge, *sb.* (etym. obscure; cf. MDu and MLG *kratsen*), scratching

craft, *sb.* (OE *cræft,* m.), craft, skill, trade, occupation, skilful contrivance

crafty, *adj.* (OE *cræftig*), skilful

crake, *v.* (OE *cracian,* W II), speak sharply; **craketh boost,** boasts noisily, I 4001

crased, *pp.* (cf. Sw *krasa*), cracked

creance, *sb.* (OF *creance*), faith; object of belief, II 340

creat, *pp., adj.* (L *creatus*), created

crekes, *sb. pl.* (etym. obscure), tricks

crepen, *v.* (OE *crēopan,* S II), creep

cridestow, cried'st thou

crips, crispe, *adj.* (OE *crisp, cyrps,* fr. L *crispus*), curly

Crisippus, Chrysippus. See note on III 669ff.

crispe. See **crips**

cristal, *adj.* (OF *cristal*), crystal; **cristal stones,** boxes of crystal or glass

Cristophere, image of St. Christopher. See note on I 115

croce, *sb.* (OF *croce*), staff

croked, *adj.* (cf. ON *krōkr*), crooked

crop, *sb.* (OE *crop,* m.), top; **croppes,** *pl.,* young shoots

cropen, *pp. of* **crepe.** See § 57

croslet, *sb.* (origin obscure), crucible

croude, *v.* (OE *crūdan*), push

croys, *sb.* (OF *crois*), cross

crul, *adj.* (cf. MDu *crul,* and other Gmc dialects), curled

cryke, *sb.* (F *crique*), small inlet or bay

cucurbite, *sb.* (L *cucurbita*), a gourd-shaped vessel of glass

cure, *sb.* (OF *cure*), care, attention, endeavor, charge; **diden . . . cure,** were busy, I 1007; **cures,** *pl.,* duties, IV 82

curious, *adj.* (OF *curius*), skilful, I 577; elaborate, I 196; occult, V 1120

cursednesse, *sb.* (OE pp. *cursed* + *-ness*), bad temper

cursen, *v.* (OE *cursian,* W II), curse, excommunicate

curtesye, *sb.* (OF *curtesie*), courtesy

Cutberd, St. Cuthbert, the chief local saint of Northumberland

cynk, *num.* (F *cinq*), five; **cynk and treye,** five and three. See note on VI 653

D

dagon, *sb.* (etym. obscure), scrap
daliance, *sb.* (cf. OF v. *dalier*), chat, gossip, I 211; pleasant talk, III 1406; **dooth he daliaunce,** chats or talks, VII 1894
dame, *sb.* (OF *dame*), dame, mother; **ma dame,** madam
dampne, *v.* (OF *dampner*, L *damnare*, *dampnare*), condemn
Dant, Dante
darreyne, *v.* (OF *derainier*), win
dart, *sb.* (OF *dart*), prize. See note on III 75
daswen, *v.* (cf. OF v. *daser*), grow dim (of the eyes)
daun, *sb.* (OF *dan*, L *dominus*), master (only as title of respect)
Daun Burnel the asse, Master Brunellus, the ass. See note on VII 4502
daunce, *sb.* (OF *dance*), dance, method, way
daunger, *sb.* (OF *dangier*), power, control
daungerous, *adj.* (AF *dangerous*), hard to please, VII 2129; haughty, I 517
daunte, *v.* (OF *danter*, L *domitare*, freq. of *domare*, tame), subdue, conquer
dawe, *sb.* (OE *dæg*, m.), day
dawe, *v.* (OE *dagian*, W II), dawn
dawenynge, *sb.* (not recorded in OE; cf. Sw and Da *dagning*), dawn
dayerye, *sb.* (cf. sb. **deye**), dairy, milch cows on a farm
debaat, *sb.* (OF *debat*), quarrel
debate, *v.* (OF *debatre*), fight, contend
debonaire, *adj.* (OF *debonaire*), gracious, gentle, courteous
deceivable, *adj.* (OF *decevable*, fr. stem of *decevoir*), deceptive, deceitful
declinacion, *sb.* (OF *declination*), astronomical term. See notes on V 1033 and 1246
dedly, *adj.* (OE *dēadlīc*), mortal, death-like, likely to die
deduyt, *sb.* (OF *deduit*), pleasure
deel, *sb.* (OE *dǣl*, m.), deal, part; **a ful greet deel,** to a great extent; **every deel,** every whit; **never a deel,** not at all
deelen, *v.* (OE *dǣlan*, W I), deal
deerne, *adj.* (OE *derne*), secret
dees, *sb.*, *pl.* (OF *de*, pl. *des*), dice
deeth, *sb.* (OE *dēað*, m.), death; the pestilence, I 605 (cf. "Black Death")
defaute, *sb.* (OF *defaute*), fault, defect
defend, deffenden, *v.* (OF *defendre*), defend, forbid; speak against, VI 590; **deffended,** *pp.*, forbidden, VI 510
degree, *sb.* (OF *degre*), degree, rank, position, condition, step or seat
deitee, *sb.* (F *deite*), ~~rule~~
delice, *sb.* (OF *delice*), pleasures
deliciously, *adv.* (cf. OF adj. *delicious*), delightfully
delitable, *adj.* (OF *delitable*), delightful
delyvere, *adj.* (OF *delivre*), agile; **delyverly,** *adv.*, quickly
demen, *v.* (OE *dēman*, W I), deem, judge, suppose, condemn
depardieux (cf. OF *de par Dieu*), by God
departen, *v.* (OF *departir*), depart, part, divide, sever; **departynge,** *sb.*
Depeford, Deptford
depeynted, *pp.* (F *depeindre*), painted
dere, *v.* (OE *derian*, W I), injure
derre, *adv.*, *comp.* (OE comp. *dierra*), more dearly
Dertemouthe, Dartmouth
desolaat, *adj.* (L *desolatus*), lacking in, II 131; lost to shame, VI 598
despit, *sb.* (OF *despit*), malice, insult; **in youre despit,** in scorn of you
despitous, *adj.* (OF *despiteus*), scornful; **despitously,** *adv.*, cruelly
desport, *sb.* (OF *desport*), mirth, pleasure
determinat, *pp.* (L *determinatus*), definite
dettour, *sb.* (OF *dettour*, L *debitorem*), debtor
devel, *sb.* (OE *dēofol*, m.), devil; **a** (twenty) **devele wey,** an expression of annoyance
devoir, *sb.* (OF *deveir*), duty
devys, *sb.* (OF *devis*), decision; **at**

point devys, exact in every respect, to perfection

devysen, divyse, *v.* (OF *deviser*), devise, contrive, tell, discuss, describe, imagine, conceive

dextrer, *sb.* (F *destrier*, LL *dextrarius*), powerful war horse

deye, *sb.* (cf. ON *deigja*), woman farm servant. See note on VII 4036

deye, *v.* (ON *deyja*), die

deynous, *adj.* (app. aphetic fr., OF *desdeignous*), disdainful

deyntee, *sb.* (OF *deintiē*), dainty, pleasure; *adj.*, excellent, fine, pleasant, delightful

deyntevous, *adj.* (prob. *deyntive* + *-ous*), delicious

deys, *sb.* (OF *deis*), dais

Dianire, Deianira

dichen, dyken, *v.* (OE *dīcian*, W II), dig, dig a ditch; **diched,** *pp.*, surrounded by a ditch, I 1888

diffame, *sb.* (OF *diffame*), evil name, dishonor

diffinicioun, *sb.* (OF *diffinicion*), restriction

dighte, *v.* (OE *dihtan*, W I), prepare; **me dighte,** go

digne, *adj.* (F *digne*, L *dignus*), honorable, worthy, noble, proud, haughty, scornful

diligence, *sb.* (F *diligence*), diligence; officiousness, IV 1185; **do my diligence,** exert myself, do my utmost

dirryve, *v.* (F *deriver*), derive, spring

dischevelee, *adj.* (OF *dischevele*), dishevelled

disconforten, *v.* (OF *desconforter*), discomfort, discourage, distress

disese, *sb.* (OF *desaise*), discomfort, trouble, inconvenience, distress, grief

dishoneste, *adj.* (OF *dishoneste*), shameful

disparage, *sb.* (OF *desparage*), disparagement (from an unequal marriage)

dispence, *sb.* (cf. OF *despendre*), expenditure

dispende, *v.* (OF *despendre*), spend, waste

displeasance, *sb.* (OF *desplaisance*), offence

dispoillen, *v.* (OF *despoillier, -oiller*), undress

disporte, *v.* (OF *desporter*), amuse

disposicion, *sb.* (OF *disposicion*), disposition, disposal; in astrology, aspect; see p. 40

disputison, *sb.* (AF *desputeison*), disputation, dispute

dissimulour, *sb.* (cf. OF v. *dissimuler*), dissembler

disteyne, *v.* (OF *desteindre*), bedim

distreyne, *v.* (OF *destreindre*), trouble, constrain

divinistre, *sb.* (stem of F *deviner* + *-istre*), prophet

division, *sb.* (OF *division*), difference, I 1780

divisynge, *sb.* (cf. OF *deviser*), workmanship

divynynge, *sb.* (cf. F *deviner*, L *divinare*), conjecturing

divyse. See **devysen**

doghty, *adj.* (OE *dyhtig*, later *dohtig*), valiant

doked, *pp.*, *adj.* (etym. obscure; cf. Icel *dockr*, short, stumpy tail), cut short

dominacion, *sb.* (F *domination*), control, VI 560; **was in his domynacioun,** had control, V 352

donge, *v.* (OE *dyngan*, W I), manure

doom, *sb.* (OE *dōm*, m.), judgment; **doomes,** *pl.*, legal decisions, I 323; **as to my doom,** in my opinion

doon, *v.* (OE *dōn*, § 92), do, make, cause; **do come,** *imp.*, make come; **do no fors,** *imp.*, take no stock; **as dooth,** pray do, V 458; **do my diligence,** make an effort; **dide,** *3 sg. pret.*, put on, VII 2047

dormant, *adj.* (OF *dormant*), fixed; **table dormant,** table with fixed legs (not a trestle table)

dostow, dost thou

doted, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. MDu v. *doten*), silly

doute, *sb.* (OF *dute*), doubt, fear; **out of doute,** without doubt

doutelees, *adv.* (OF *dute* + OE *lēs*), doubtless

down, *sb.* (Celt *dūn*), hill
drad, *pp. of* **drede**
dradde, *pret. of* **drede**
draf, *sb.* (OE **dræf;* cf. Du *draf*, Icel *drof*, Sw *drof*, Dan *drav*), draff, refuse of malt after brewing
drasty, *adj.* (cf. OE *dærstan*, *derstan*, pl., dregs), vile, worthless
drawen, *v.* (OE *dragan*, S VI), draw, drag, bring, attract; **drawen hem apart,** reflex. depart; **dide hem drawe,** caused them to be drawn, VII 1823
drecche, *v.* (OE *dreccan*, *dreccean*, W I), torment
drēde, *sb.* (cf. v.), dread, doubt; **it is no drede,** there is no doubt, without doubt; **out of drede,** without doubt
drēde, *v.* (OE *ondrēdan*, originally S VII; later, W I), fear
drēdeful, *adj.* (cf. sb. **drede**), fearful, timid
dredles, *adj.* (cf. sb. **drede**), doubtless
drenchen, *v.* (OE *drencan*, W I), drown
dresse, *v.* (OF *dresser*), dress, address, prepare, set in order, arrange, direct
dreynt, *pp. of* **drenchen.**
dronkelewe, *adj.* (ME *dronken* + *-lewe*), drunken, addicted to drink
droppyng, *p. adj.* (OE v. *dropian*, *droppian*, W II), leaky, III 278
drough, drowe, *pret. of* **drawen.** See § 73
drugge, *v.* (perh. dial. var. of *drag*, OE *dragan*, ON *draga*), drag, pull
drury, *sb.* (OF *druerie*), love-making; **love-drury,** love token or gift
drye, *v.* (OE *drēogan*, S II), suffer
duetee, *sb.* (AF *duete*), duty, respect
Dun, a name for a brown horse
Dunmowe, a town in Essex. See note on III 218
dure, *v.* (F *durer*), last
dyapred, *pp., adj.* (cf. F *diaprer*), diapered, having its surface ornamented with a small, uniform pattern, especially diamond-shaped
dyken. See **dichen**

E

Ebrayk, Hebrew
eche, *v.* (OE *ēcan*, WS *īēcan*, W I), increase
eek, eke, *conj., adv.* (OE *ēac*), also, moreover, likewise
eet, *pret. of* **eten.** See § 66
effect, *sb.* (OF *effect*, L *effectus*), effect, reality, consequence, significance; **in effect,** in fact, in reality
eft, *adv.* (OE *eft*), again
eggement, *sb.* (v. *egg* [ON v. *eggja*] + F *-ment*), instigation
egre, *adj.* (OF *aigre*), savage
eighe. See **eye**
eighteteethe, (OE *eahtatēoða*), eighteenth
eke. See **eek**
elde, *sb.* (OE *eldo*, f.), old age
eleccion, *sb.* (OF *election*), choice; for astrological use, see p. 142
Eleyne, Helen of Troy
ellebor, *sb.* (F *ellebore*, L *elleborus*), hellebore
elvyssh, *adj.* (OE *ælf*, m. + *-ish*), like an otherworld creature
embrouded, enbrouded, *pp., adj.* (OF *embroder*), embroidered
Emel, Aemilia, a district in Northern Italy
emforth, *prep.* (OE *em*, even, + *-forth*), according to, in proportion to
emprise, *sb.* (OF *emprise*), undertaking
encheson, *sb.* (OF *encheson*), cause, motive
ende, *sb.* (OE *ende*, m.), end, conclusion, agreement
endelong, *prep.* (pop. etym. *ende* + *long*, for *andlong;* cf. ON *endelangr*), along
endite, *v.* (OF *enditer*), compose
Enee, Aeneas
Eneydos, Aeneid
enforce, *v.* (OF *enforcier*, *-cir*), strengthen; **enforce the,** reïnforce thyself, III 340
engyne, *v.* (OF *enginier*, *engyner*), ~~torture~~

enhorte, *v.* (OF *enhorter*), exhort
enlutyng, *sb.* (cf. L *lutum*), sealing with clay
enoynt, *pp., adj.* (OF pp. *enoint*), anointed
ensample, *sb.* (OF *essample*), example
entende, *v.* (F *entendre*), attend, direct the mind to
entente, *sb.* (OF *entente*), intent, purpose, attention, design
ententyf, *adj.* (OF *ententif*), attentive
entremete, *v.* (OF *entremettre*), take part, meddle
entune, *v.* (OF *entoner*), intone, chant
envoluped, *pp., adj.* (cf. OF *envoluper*), enveloped
envyned, *pp., adj.* (cf. F *envine*), stored with wine
Episteles, Ovid's *Heroides*
equacion, *sb.* (L *equationem*), astronomical term: allowance for minor motions
equynoxial, *sb.* (F *equinoxial*), astronomical term: the celestial equator
er, *conj.* (OE *ǣr*), before; **erst er,** first, before
ercedekene, *sb.* (OE *ercediacon*, L *archidiaconus*), archdeacon, an ecclesiastic next in rank to a bishop, with power to hold court and to judge ecclesiastical cases
ere, *sb.* (OE *ēare*, n.), ear; **eeris, eres, erys,** *pl.*
ere, *v.* (OE *erian*, W I), plough
erme, *v.* (OE *yrman, ierman*, W I), grieve
erst, *adv.* (OE *ǣrest*), first, at first, before; **erst than,** before; **at erst,** at first
eryd, *pp. of* **ere.**
eschaunge, *sb.* (OF *eschange*, AF *eschaunge*), exchange, the trade of money changing
ese, *sb.* (OF *aise*), ease, comfort, pleasure; **doon you ese,** give you pleasure
ese, *v.* (OF *aisier*), entertain, set at ease
espiaille, *sb.* (OF *espiaille*), spies, espionage system
espye, *sb.* (OF *espie*), spy
estat, *sb.* (OF *estat*), estate, state, rank, condition
Estoryal Myrour, *Speculum Historiale* (*Mirror of History*), by Vincent of Beauvais (13th century)
estres, *sb. pl.* (OF *estres*), interior
eten, *v.* (OE *etan*, S V), eat
evangile, *sb.* (L *euangelium*), gospel
even, *sb.* (OE *ǣfen*, n.) evening
evene, *adj.* (OE *efen*), moderate, serene; **evene,** *adv.*, exactly
everich, *adj., pro.* (OE *ǣfer ǣlc*), each, every, everyone; **everich a,** each; **everich on,** *pro.*, everyone
exaltacion, *sb.* (F *exaltation*), astrological term. See p. 139
exaltat, *pp.*, astrological term. See p. 139
expans, *adj.* (L *expansus*), astronomical term. See p. 136
eye, eighe, ÿe, *sb.* (OM *ēge*, WS *ēage*, n.), eye; **eyen, eyn,** *pl.*; **at eye,** at sight
eyle, *v.* (OE *eglian*, W II), ail, trouble

F

face, *sb.* (F *face*), face; for astrological use, see p. 139
facound, *adj.* (F *facond*, adj., *faconde*, sb.), eloquent; **facounde,** *sb.*, eloquence
facultee, *sb.* (OF *faculte*), official position and function
fadm, *sb.* (OE *fæðm*, m.), fathom
faire, *adj., sb.* (OE *fæger*), beautiful; **a fair,** a good person, I 165; **the fair,** the beauty, V 518; **faire,** *adv.*, well
fairye, *sb.* (OF *faerie*), fairyland; piece of magic, V 201
faldyng, *sb.* (etym. obscure), coarse serge
fallen, *v.* (OE *feallan*, S VII), fall, happen, be fitting
falow, *adj.* (OE *falu*, pl. *fealwe*), yellow, sallow; **falwe rede,** yellowish red; **falwes,** *sb. pl.*, fallow ground, III 656
falsen, *v.* (OF *falser*), misrepresent, betray

famulier, *adj.* (OF *famulier*), familiar, intimate

fantasie, *sb.* (OF *fantasie*), whim, pleasure

fantome, *sb.* (OF *fantosme*), delusion

fare, *sb.* (OE *fær*, n. *faru*, f.), action, proceeding, "doings"; **made fare,** made a fuss

faren, *v.* (OE *faran*, S VI), fare, go, act, succeed, conduct one's self; **wel-farynge,** *pres. p. as adj.*, well behaved

fares, *3 sg. pres. for* **fareth** (Nth)

faste, *adv.* (OE *fæste*), fast, close, near, hard, eagerly

faucone, *sb.* (OF *faucon*), falcon

fawe, *adj.* (OE *fægen, fægn*), glad

fay, feith, fey, *sb.* (OF *fei*, OE *feid, feit*), faith, loyalty; **par ma fay,** by my faith

fecchen, *v.* (OE *feccan*, W I), fetch, bring

fee, *sb.* (AF *fee;* cf. OE *fēoh*, n.), fee, reward, payment; **fee simple,** see note on I 318

feere, *sb.* (OE *gefēr*, n.), company

feestlych, *adj.* (*feeste* + *-lych*), festive

feet, *sb.* (OF *fait*), art

feith. See **fay**

feithfully, *adv.* (cf. OF *feid, feit*), faithfully, certainly, assuredly

fel, *adj.* (OE *fel*), cruel, fierce, terrible

felawe, *sb.* (OE *feolaga*, m., fr. ON *felagi*), fellow, companion, comrade, partner; **good felawe,** rascal

felaweshipe, *sb.* (*felawe* + *-shipe*), fellowship, company, partnership

feldefare, *sb.* (OE **feldefare*, miswritten, *feldeware*, occurs once), fieldfare

fele, *adj.* (OM *feolo*, WS *feola, fela*), much, many

felle, *v.* (OE *fellan*, W I), fell, cut down; **feld,** *pp.*

Femenye, *sb.* (L *femina*), kingdom of the Amazons

fen, *sb.* (L *fen*, Arab *fann*), section of Avicenna's *Canon*. See note on VI 887ff.

fer, *adj., adv.* (OE *feorr*), far, distant; **ferre, ferrer, ferther,** *comp.;* **ferreste,** *sup.*

ferde, *pret. of* **faren.** See § 69

fere, *sb.* (ONth *fāra*, aphetic fr. OE *gefēra*, m.), companion, mate

fere, *v.* (cf. OE sb. *fær*), fear, frighten

ferforth, ferforthly, *adv.* (OE *feorr* + *forð*), far

fermacie, *sb.* (OF *farmacie*), medicine

fern-asshen, *sb. pl.* (OE *fearn*, n. + OE, *asce*, f.), fern ashes

ferne, *adj.* (OE *fyrn*), distant, ancient; **so fern,** so long ago

ferrer. See **fer**

ferreste. See **fer**

ferthe, *num. adj.* (OE *fēorða*), fourth

ferther. See **fer**

ferthyng, *sb.* (OE *feorðung*, f.), bit

fesaunt, *sb.* (AF *fesaunt*), pheasant

fest, *sb.* (OE *fȳst*, K *fest*), fist

feste, *sb.* (OF *feste*), feast, festival, merrymaking; **feeste maketh,** shows honour to, IV 1109

festne, *v.* (OE *fæstnian*, W II), fasten

fet, *pp. of* **fecche**

fette, *pret. of* **fecche**

fetys, *adj.* (OF *fetis, faitis*), neat, well-formed, graceful, handsome; **fetisly,** *adv.*

fevere, *sb.* (OE *fefor*), fever; **fevere terciane,** intermittent fever

fey. See **fay**

feynte, *v.* (OF *feintir*), enfeeble

feyntyng, *sb.* (cf. OF *feintir*), failing

figure, *sb.* (F *figure*), figure; **figures,** figures of rhetoric, IV 16; for astrological use, see note on I 2045

filet, *sb.* (F *filet*, dim. of L *filum*, thread), headband

fillen, *pret. of* **fallen.** See § 76

fit, *sb.* (OE *fit, fitt*, f.), canto

fithele, *sb.* (OE *fiðele*, f.), fiddle

flatour, *sb.* (OF *flateour*), flatterer

flaugh, *pret. of* **fleen.** See § 58

Flaundryssh, Flemish

fleen, *sb. wk. pl.* (OE *flēah, flēa*, m.), fleas

fleen, *v.* (OE *flēogan*, S II), flee, fly

fleigh, *pret. of* **fleen.** See § 58

flemere, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *flīeman*, W I, ON *flæma*), one who puts to flight

flete, *v.* (OE *flēotan*, S II), float, drift

flokmeele, *adv.* (OE *floccmælum*), in crowds

flotery, *adj.* (cf. OE v. *flotorian*, W II, freq. of *flēotan*, S II), waving

flowen, *pret. pl. and pp. of* **fleen.** See § 58

floytynge, *pres. p.* (OF *fleüter*), whistling. See note on I 91

flygh, *pret. of* **fleen.** See § 58

fnese, *v.* (OE *fnesan;* cf. Icel *fnœsa*), snort

fnorten, *v.* (cf. OE *fnora*), snore

foled, *pp., adj.* (cf. OE sb. *fola*, m.), foaled, born

foly, *adv.* (cf. OF sb. *folie*), foolishly

fond, *pret. sg. of* **fynden.** See § 62

fonde, *v.* (OE *fandian*, W II), try

fonge, *v.* (OE *fon*, S VI; cf. late Icel *fanga*), receive

fonne, *sb.* (cf. Sw *fåne*), fool

foore (OE *fōr*, f.), trail, steps

foot-hoot, *adv.* (*foot* [OE *fōt*, m.] + *hot*), in hot haste

foot-mantel, *sb.* (OE *fōt*, m. + OF *mantel*), foot-cloth. See note on I 472

for-, *intens. pref.* (OE *for-*), with verb has variety of meanings. Cf. compounds listed below

for, *conj.* (OE *for*), for, because, so that, in order that; **for that,** in order that, IV 372

for, *prep.* (OE *for*), for, at, because of, against, despite, notwithstanding; **for percynge of his herte,** to prevent piercing his heart; **for traison,** to ward off treason; **for to be deed,** to avoid death, IV 364; **for noon engyn,** by means of no device, V 184; **for me,** by me, V 357; **for which,** wherefore

forbode, *sb.* (OE *forbod*, n.), prohibition

for by, *adv.* (*for* + *by*), by, past, near by

fordo, *v.* (OE *fordōn*, see § 92), destroy, ruin; *pp.*, I 1560, V 1562

foreward, forward, *sb.* (OE *fōreweard, fōrewarde*, f.), agreement, promise

for-fered, *pp.* (*for-* + pp. *fered*,) greatly frightened

forgeten, *v.* (OE *forgietan*, S V), forget

forlete, *v.* (OE *forlætan*, S VII), give up

forneys, *sb.* (OF *fornais*), furnace

forpyned, *pp.* (OE *for-* + *pīnian*, W II), tormented

fors, *sb.* (F *force*), consequence, importance; **ne do no fors,** pay no heed; **no fors,** no matter

forslewthen, *v.* (OE *forslāwian*, W II), waste by sloth

forther over, *adv.* (*forth* + *over*), moreover, furthermore

forthy, *adv.* (OE *for ðȳ*), therefore, for that reason

fortunen, *v.* (OF *fortuner*), interpret favorably, I 417; grant fortune to, I 2377

for-waked, *pp.* (OE *for-* + *wacian*, W II), worn out with watching

forward. See **foreward**

for-why, *conj.* (OE *for* + *hwȳ*), wherefore, because

forwityng, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *forwitan*, see § 91), foreknowledge

forwoot, *v.* (pret. of OE *forwitan*, see § 91) foreknew

for-wrapped, *pp.* (*for-* + pp. of ME v. *wrappen*, etym. obscure), closely wrapped

foryelde, *v.* (OE *forgieldan*, S III), repay, requite

fostren, *v.* (cf. OE sb. *fōstor*, food, n.), bring up, care for

fother, *sb.* (OE *foðer*, n.), cartload

foul, *sb.* (OE *fugol*, m.), bird

foundren, *v.* (OF *fondrer*), stumble

foyne, *v.* (OF *foine*), thrust

foyson, *sb.* (OF *foyson*), plenty

fra, *prep. for* **fro** (Nth)

frakenes, *sb. pl.* (cf. ON *freknur*, pl.), freckles

franchise, *sb.* (OF *franchise*), nobility of mind

frankeleyn, *sb.* (LL *franchilanus*), franklin. See note on I 331

frayne, *v.* (OE *fregnan, frignan*, S III), ask

fre, *adj.* (OE *frēo*), free, bounteous, noble, generous

fredom, *sb.* (OE *frēodōm*, m.), liberality

freenly, *adv.* (OE *frēondlīc*), in a friendly way

freletee, *sb.* (OF *frailete*), frailty
fremde, *adj.* (OE *fremde*), foreign
frenge, *sb.* (OF *frenge*), fringe
frere, *sb.* (OF *frere*, L *fratrem*), friar
fressh, *adj.* (OE *fersc*), fresh
freten, *v.* (OE *fretan*, S V), eat, devour
fro, *prep.* (ON *frā*), from
frosch. See **fressh**
fructuous, *adj.* (OF *fructuous*), fruitful
frutestere, *sb.* (*fruit* [OF *fruit*] + *-ster*), woman fruit vender
fulsomnesse, *sb.* (*full* + *som* + *-nesse*), excess
fume, *sb.* (OF *fume*), vapor. See note on VII 4114
fumetere, *sb.* (OF *fumeterre*), fumitory, a plant of the genus Fumaria
fumiygacion, *sb.* (L *fumigationem*), fume of incantation
fumositee, *sb.* (F *fumosite*), vaporous humor. See note on VII 4114
fundament, *sb.* (L *fundamentum*), foundation
furial, *adj.* (OF *furial*), furious
furie, *sb.* (F *furie*), infernal spirit
furlong, *sb.* (OE *furlang*, n. fr. *furh* [furrow] + *lang*), furlong; **a furlong wey**, a short time (the time it would take to go a furlong), IV 516; **furlong**, *pl.*, V 1172
fustian, *sb.* (OF *fustaine*), fustian, a coarse cloth made of cotton or flax
fyn, *sb.* (OF *fin*), end
fynch, *sb.*, a bird; for slang use, see note on I 650ff.
fynden, *v.* (OE *findan*, S III), find, discover, provide for; **fyndes**, *3 sg. pres.* (Nth); **fyndyng**, *sb.*, support; **fynt**, *3 sg. pres.*, see § 80
Fyssh (OE *fisc*, m.). See p. 135

G

ga, *pres. imp.* fr. **gon** (Nth)
gabbe, *v.* (OF *gaber;* cf. Icel *gabba*), boast, jest
gaillard, gaylard, *sb.* (OF *gaillard*), full of high spirits
gaitrys, *sb.* (OE *gāte trēow*, n. modified by OE *hrīs*, bush), goat tree; **gaitrys berys**, goat tree berries
Galathee, Galatea. See note on V 1110
gale, *v.* (OE *galan*, S VI), cry out, exclaim
Galgopheye, Gargaphia, where Actaeon was killed by his hounds; cf. I 2626
Galice, Galicia, in northern Spain, where there is the famous shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela
Galiones, *sb. pl.* (med.L *galienus*); an improvised word; see note on VI 305–07
galoche, *sb.* (F *galoche*), shoe
galpyng, *p. adj.* (cf. OS v. *galpōn*, boast; MDu and MG *galpen*, bark; cognate with *yelp*), gaping
galwes, *sb. pl.* (OE *galga*, m.), gallows
galyngale, *sb.* (OF *galingal*), galingale, a spice made from the root of sweet cyperus
game, *sb.* (OE *gamen*, n.), amusement, delight, jest
game, *v.* (OE *gamenian*, W II), please (used impersonally)
gan, *pret. of* **ginne.** See § 62
gane, *v.* (OE *gānian*, W II), yawn
gargat, *sb.* (OF *gargate*), throat
gas, *3 sg. pres. of* **gon** (Nth)
gat-tothed, *adj.* (OE *gæt*, f. pl., *gatu* + OE *tōð*, m.), with teeth far apart. See note on I 468
gaude, *sb.* (L *gaudium*, pl. *gaudia*), trickery
gaude, *adj.* (OF *gaude*, weld), yellow; **gaude green**, yellowish green, I 2079
gauded, *adj.* (perh. fr. L *gaudia*), furnished with large beads, called gauds; see note on I 159
Gaufred, Geoffrey de Vinsauf. See note on VII 4537
Gaunt, Ghent
gauren, *v.* (cf. ON v. *gā*, heed), stare
gayne, *v.* (ON *gegna*), avail, serve, help (not the modern word *gain*)
geen, *pp.* fr. **gon** (Nth)
geere, *sb.* (etym. obscure), turn, change; **geres**, *pl.*, I 1531
geery, *adj.* (**geere** + *-y*), changeable
geeste, *sb.* (OF *geste*), tale in verse

geeste, *v.* (cf. OF sb. *geste*, L *gesta*), tell a tale
gent, *adj.* (OF *gent*), noble, graceful, refined
gentil, *adj.* (OF *gentil*), noble, gentle; **gentils,** *sb. pl.*, gentlefolk
gentillesse, *sb.* (F *gentillesse*), nobility, courtesy
Genylon, Ganelon, the traitor in the *Chanson de Roland*
gerdon, *sb.* (OF *guerdon*), recompense
gere, *sb.* (cf. ON *gervi, görvi;* OE f. pl. *gearwe*), equipment, apparel, utensils, I 352; **geeris,** *pl.*, appliances, V 1276
gereful, *adj.* (**gere** + *-ful*), changeful, fitful
Gernade, the kingdom of Granada
gerner, *sb.* (OF *gerner*), granary
Geronnde, the river Gironde, near Bordeaux
gest, *sb.* (OE *gæst, giest,* m.), guest
gestour, *sb.* (cf. OF *geste*), storyteller. See note on VII 2035f.
geten, *v.* (OM *getan,* ON *geta,* S V), get, obtain, beget
giggynge, *pres. p.* (cf. OF *guige*, sb.), fitting the *guige* or arm strap to a shield
ginne, *v.* (OE *onginnan,* S III), begin, attempt; **gan,** *pret. sg.*, **gonnen,** *pret. pl.* (used as auxiliaries), did
gipser, *sb.* (OF *gibessiere*), game bag, purse, pouch
girden, *v.* (etym. obscure; perh. from same source as *girden*, gird), strike, pierce; **girt,** *pp.*
girl, *sb.* (etym. obscure), young person of either sex; **girles,** *pl.* See note on I 664
girt, *pp. of* **girden.** See § 51
gise, *sb.* (OF *guise*), guise, way, manner, custom, style
giterne, *sb.* (OF *guiterne*), cithern, an instrument similar to a guitar
gladere, *sb.* (cf. OE adj. *glæd* + *-er*), one who cheers
gladly (cf. OE *glæd*), usually, generally, VII 4414; V 224, 376
glee, *sb.* (OE *glēo*, m.), music
gleede, *sb.* (OE *glēd*, f.), live coal
glood, *pret. of* **glide** (OE *glīdan*, S I), glided
glose, *sb.* (OF *glose*, LL *glosa*), comment
glosen, *v.* (OF *gloser*), explain
gnof, *sb.* (cf. EFris *knufe*, lump), churl, boor, lout
gobet, *sb.* (OF *gobet*), piece, fragment
golet, *sb.* (OF *goulet*), gullet
goliardeys, *sb.* (OF *goliardois*), jester
gon, *v.* (OE *gān*, § 92), go, walk; **go or ryde;** *pres. pl.* walk or ride
gonnen, *pret. pl. of* **ginne.** See § 61
good, *sb.* (OE *gōd*, n.), property
gooldes, *sb.* (OE *golde*, f., perh. long *o* in OE), marigolds
goore, *sb.* (OE *gāra*, m.), gore or section of garment; applied also to the whole
Gootland, Gottland, an island in the Baltic Sea
goshauke, *sb.* (OE *gōs-hafoc*, m.; cf. ON *gāshaukr*), goshawk. See note on VII 1928
gossib, *sb.* (OE *godsibb*, m. fr. *god* + *sibb*), intimate friend
gost, *sb.* (OE *gāst*, m.), ghost; spirit, II 404
governaille, *sb.* (OF *governail*), mastery
governaunce, *sb.* (OF *governaunce*), government, management, direction, manner of control, self-control
governour, *sb.* (OF *governeur*), ruler, master, umpire
grant mercy, graunt mercy (OF *grant merci*), gramercy, many thanks
grave, *v.* (OE *grafan*, S VI), dig, engrave, bury
gree, *sb.* (OF *gre*, L *gratum*), good will; **in gree,** with good will
gree, *sb.* (OF *gre*, L *gradum*), degree, rank, supremacy
grenehede, *sb.* (OE *grēne* + *hēafod*, n.), greenness
greses, *sb. pl.* (OE *græs*, n.), grasses
grete, *adj.* (OE *grēat*), great, large, full; **Grete See,** Mediterranean Sea
grette, *pret. of* **greten** (OE *grētan*, W I), greeted
greve, *sb.* (OE *grǣfa*, m.), brushwood; *pl.*, thicket, I 1641
greyn, *sb.* (OF *graine*), red dye made

from cochineal; **in greyn,** dyed a fast color

grifphon, *sb.* (OF *grifoun, gripon*), griffin

grope, *v.* (OE *grāpian,* W II), test. See note on I 644

grote, *sb.* (MDu *groot*), groat, fourpence

ground, *sb.* (OE *grund,* m.), texture

groynynge, *sb.* (cf. v. *groin* fr. OF *grognir*), murmuring

grucche, *v.* (OF *groucher*), grumble, complain, murmur at

gruf, *adv.* (ON *grufa*), face downward

grynt, *3 sg. pres. of* **grynden** (OE *grindan,* S III), grinds

grys, *sb.* (OF *gris*), gray, a costly gray fur

gyden, *v.* (F *guider*), guide, direct

gye, *v.* (OF *guier*), guide, direct, govern

Gyle, Giles

gyn, *sb.* (aphetic form of OF *engin*), mechanical contrivance, machinery

gynglen, *v.* (imitative), jingle

gypon, *sb.* (OF *gipon*), doublet. See note on I 75

gyte, *sb.* (app. OF *guite,* acc. to Godefroy, veil), kind of dress or gown

H

haberdasshere, *sb.* (cf. AF *hapertas*), haberdasher, a seller of hats, stationery, notions and so on

habergeon, *sb.* (OF *hauberjon*), habergeon, coat of mail. See note on VII 2050–58

haf, *pret. of* **heve.** See § 66

hakeney, *sb.* (OF *haquenee*), riding horse

halde, *v.* (Nth). See **holden**

half, *sb.* (OE *healf,* f.), side; sake, III 50

halke, *sb.* (OE *healoc,* m., n.?), nook

hals, *sb.* (OE *hals,* m.), neck

halsen, *v.* (OE *halsian, healsian,* W II), implore

halt, *3 sg. pres. of* **holden.** See § 80

halwe, *sb.* (OE *halga,* m.; cf. adj. *halig*), saint; applied in plural to shrines or relics of saints

haly day, *sb.* (OE *hālig* + *dæg,* m.), religious feast day

ham, *sb.* (OE *hām,* m.), home (Nth)

han, *3 pl. pres.,* contr. fr. **have** (Nth); also *infin.*

hange, honge, *v.* (OE *hangian,* W II; but also *hōn,* S VII), hang

happe, *sb.* (ON *happ*), chance

hardily, *adv.* (OE *heardlice*), certainly, assuredly

hardyng, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *heardian,* W II), hardening

harlot, *sb.* (OF *harlot*), rascal

harlotrye, *sb.* (cf. OF *harlot*), ribaldry, villainy

harneised, *pp.* (OF *harneschier*), mounted

harneys, *sb.* (OF *harneis*), armour (of man or horse); **harneys,** *pl.,* I 1630, 1634

harre, *sb.* (OE *heorre,* f.), hinge

harrow, *interj.* (OF *haro, harow*). See note on VII 4235

harye, *v.* (prob. confusion of, OF *harier* and OE *herian,* W I), drag

hasard, *sb.* (OF *hasard*), hazard, a game played with dice; gambling

hasardour, *sb.* (AF *hasardour*), gambler

hasardrye, *sb.* (cf. **hasard**), gambling

hastif, *adj.* (OF *hastif*), hasty; **in hastif wyse,** quickly

hastifliche, *adv.* (OF *hastif* + OE *-liche*), hastily

hastily, *adv.* (cf. *hastif*), hastily, quickly; promptly, III 1726

hastou, hastow, hast thou

hauberk, *sb.* (OF *hauberc*), hauberk, armor for the breast and back. See note on VII 2050–58

haunt, *sb.* (cf. F v. *hanter*), abode, skill, practice

haunten, *v.* (F *hanter*), haunt, practice habitually; **haunteden,** *pret. pl.*

hauteyn, *adj.* (OF *hautain*), arrogant

hawe, *sb.* (OE *haga,* m., hedge), yard, VI 855; fruit of the wild rose, III 659; **with hawe-bake,** baked haws

Hayles, Hailes Abbey. See note on VI 652

haysogge, *sb.* (OE *hegesugge,* f.), hedge sparrow

hayt, heyt, *interj.*, (Nth, cf. G *hott*), "get up!" a cry to urge on a horse

heed, *sb.* (OE *hēafod*, n.), head, source; **maugree youre heed,** in spite of all you can do

heelp, *pret. of* **helpen.** See § 60

heep, *sb.* (OE *hēap*, m.), crowd, great number, large quantity

heer, *sb.* (OM *hēr*, WS *hār*, n.), hair; **heeres, heeris, heris, herys,** *pl.*

heet, *pret. of* **hote.** See § 77

heete, *by-form of* **hote.** See § 77

heeth, *sb.* (OE *hǣð*, f.), heath, heather

hegge, *sb.* (OE *hegg*, f.), hedge

heigh, *adj.* (OE *hēah*), high

helde, *v.* (?WS *healdan*, S VII), hold. See **holden**

hele, *sb.* (OE *hālu*, f. indecl.), health, well-being, prosperity

Helowys, Heloise

helpen, *v.* (OE *helpan*, S III), help, aid; **as wisly helpe me the grete God,** so may the great God help me

hem, *pro. pl. dat. and acc.* (OE dat. pl. *him, heom*), them, themselves

hende, *adj.*(cf. OE *gehende*, at hand), pleasant, gentle, courteous

heng, *pret. of* **hange.** See § 76

henne, *adv.* (OE *heonan*), hence

hente, *v.* (OE *hentan*, W I), seize, catch, obtain, get

hepe, *sb.* (OE *hēope*, f.), hip of the dog rose

heraud, *sb.* (OF *heraut*), herald; **heraudes,** *pl.*

herbergage, *sb.* (ONF *herbergage*), dwelling place; **streit of herbergage,** limited as to lodging places

herbergeour, *sb.* (OF *herbergere, herbergeour*), host

herberwe, *sb.* (OE *herebeorg;* cf. ON *herbergi*), lodging, dwelling

herberwynge, *sb.* (cf. *herberwe*), lodging

herbe-yve, *sb.* (L *herba* + uncertain), coronopus. See note on VII 4156

herd, *adj.*, haired. See **heer,** *sb.*

here, *pro. f.* (OE *hiere, hire, hyre*, dat.), her. This form is used only in rhyme. See **hire**

herestow, hear'st thou

herie, *v.* (OE *herian*, W I), praise

heris. See **heer**

heriynge, *sb.* (OE *herung*, f.), praise

herknen, *v.* (OE *hercnian, heorcnian*, W II), listen

Hermyon, Hermione

herne, *sb.* (OE *hyrne*, f.), corner

heronsew, *sb.* (OF *heronceau*), young heron

Herro, Hero, the sweetheart of Leander

hertely, hertly, *adj.* (cf. OE *heorte*, f.), hearty, sincere; **hertely,** *adv.*

herte-spoon, *sb.* (OE *heorte*, f. + *spōn*, m.), the depression at the end of the breast bone

hertly. See **hertely**

heste, *sb.* (OE *hās*, f.), command, promise; **heestes,** *pl.*

Hester, Esther

heterly, *adv.* (cf. MLG *hetter*, and OE sb. *hete*, m.), violently

hethyng, *sb.* (OE *hāðing*, f.), scoffing mockery, contempt

hette, *pret. of* **heten** (OE *hātan*, W I), heated

heve, *v.* (OE *hebban, hæbban*, S VI), heave, lift

heved, *sb.* (OE *hēafod*, n.), head

hevynesse, *sb.* (OE *hefignes*, f.), sorrow, grief

heyne, *sb.* (origin obscure), a rascal or wretch

heyre-clowt, *sb.* (OE *hār*, n. + *clūt*, m.), haircloth

heyt. See **hayt**

heythen, *adv.* (ON *heþan*), hence

hierde, *sb.* (OE *hirde, hierde*, m.), herd, shepherd

highte, *sb.* (OE *hiehþo*, f. indecl.), height; **on highte,** on high, loudly

highte, *pret. of* **hote.** See § 77

hire, *pro. f. sg.* (OE *hiere, hyre*, etc.), her; *gen. pl.* (OE *hiera, hira*), their, of them; **hir aller,** of them all

his, *pro. m. and n.* (OE gen. m. and n. *his*), his, its; **hise,** *pl.*

hit, *3 sg. pres. of* **hyde.** See § 80

Hogge, Hodge, a nickname for Roger

hoker, *sb.* (OE *hōcor*, m.?), disdain

holden, *v.* (OM *haldan*, WS *healdan*, S VII), hold, keep, consider

Holdernesse, Holderness, the south-eastern part of Yorkshire
holour, *sb.* (OF *holier, holer, huler,* later *houlleur*), debauché, ribald
holpen, *pp. of* **helpen** (OE *helpan,* S III), helped
holt, *sb.* (OE *holt,* m. and n.), wood
honeste, *adj.* (OF *honeste*), honorable, becoming, fitting; **honestly,** *adv.*
honestee, *sb.* (OF *honeste*), virtue, VII 3157
honestetee, *sb.* (OF *honestete*), virtue
honge. See **hange**
hool, *adj.* (OE *hāl*), whole, perfect, well; **hoole, hoolly,** *adv.;* **al hool,** *adv.*, entirely
hoold, *sb.* (OE *heald, hald,* n.), castle, possession
hoomly, *adv.* (OE *hām,* m. + *-līce*), simply
hoomlynes, *sb.* (not recorded in OE; but cf. OE *hām,* m.), domesticity
hoote, *pp. of* **hote.** See § 77
hoote, *adv.* (OE *hāte*), hotly, fervently
hope, *v.* (OE *hopian,* W II), hope, expect (with or without desire), think
hoppesteres, *sb. pl.* (OE *hoppystre,* f., fr. *hoppian*), dancers. See note on I 2017
hord, *sb.* (OE *hord,* n., m.), treasure
hore, *adj.* (OE *hār*), hoary
hostiler, *sb.* (OF *hostel* + *-er*), innkeeper
hote, *v.* (OE *hātan,* S VII), command, promise, call, be called
houre, *sb.* (AF *houre*), hour; for astrological use, see p. 143
hous, *sb.* (OE *hūs,* n.), house, household
housbondrie, *sb.* (OE *hūsbonda,* m. + *-ry*), economical management; household articles, III 288
howpe, *v.* (OF *houper,* imitative; cf. OE, *hwōpan,* threaten, S VII), whoop
howve, *sb.* (OE *hūfe,* f.), cap
Hull, an important seaport on the east coast of England
humour, *sb.* (AF *humour*), humor. See note on I 333
hunte, *sb.* (OE *hunta,* m.), hunter
hust, *pp., adj.* (app. fr. interj., *hust*), hushed
hye, *sb.* (cf. verb), haste; **in hye,** in haste, quickly
hye, *v.* (OE *higian,* W II), hasten; bring quickly, V 291

I

i-ben, *pp. of* **be.**
ik, *pro.* (OE *ic*), I (Nth)
i-knowe, *v.* (OE *gecnāwan,* S VII), understand
ilhayl (ON *illr.,* bad + ON *heill,* health), bad luck (Nth)
ilke, *pro., adj.* (OE *ilca*), same, very same
i-loryn, *pp. of* **lese.** See § 57
Ilyon, Ilium, the citadel of Troy
in, *sb.* (OE *inn,* n.), house
inequal, *adj.* (L *in* + *æqualis*), unequal; for astrological use, see p. 143
infect, *adj.* (L *infectus*), invalidated
infortune, *sb.* (F *infortune*), bad fortune
ingot, *sb.* (origin obscure), mould
inne, *adv.* (OE *inne*), in, within
inned, *pp.* (cf. OE sb. *inn,* n.), lodged
innocent, *adj., sb.* (F *innocent*), unsuspecting; *sb.*, young child free from sin, VII 1728, 1825; **innocentz,** *pl.*
inportable, *adj.* (F *importable*), unbearable
interesse, *sb.* (AF *interesse,* L *interesse,* be between), interest
in-with, *prep.* (OE *wiþ-innan*), within
Isiphilee, Hypsipyle
itauht, *pp.* (*tēcan,* W I), taught
iwroken, *pp. of* **wreke.** See § 66

J

jade, *sb.* (etym. obscure), jade, hack
Jakke-of-Dovere. See note on I 4346f.
Jakke Straw, Jack Straw. See note on VII 4584
jambeux, *sb. pl.* (AF *jambeau*), leg armor
Jame, James
jane, *sb.* (OF *janne*), small Genoese coin
Janekyn, Jenkin (diminutive of John)

jangle, *v.* (OF *jangler*), chatter
janglere, *sb.* (cf. v. **jangle**), jester, chatterer; **jangleresse,** *f.*
jangles, *sb. pl.* (cf. v. **jangle**), jabber
jape, *sb.* (cf. OF *gaber*, F *japper*), jest, trick, foolish tale
japen, *v.* (cf. OF *gaber*, F *japper*), jest, beguile, befool
jeet, *sb.* (OF *jaiet*), jet
Jerome against Jovynyan. See note on III 669ff.
jet, *sb.* (OF *get, giet*), fashion; trick
Jewerye, Juerie, *sb.* (AF *juerie*), ghetto, *Jews' quarter*. See note on VII 1679
Joce, Jodocus. See note on III 484
jogelour, *sb.* (OF *joglere*, L *joculator*), jester
jolitee, *sb.* (OF *jolite*), jollity, sport, amusement, pleasure
jossa, a call used in rounding up horses; meaning and etymology obscure
Joves, Jupiter (gen. used as nom.)
Jubaltar, Gibraltar
jueles, *sb. pl.* (AF *juel*), jewels
Juerie. See **Jewerye**
Juliane, Julian, the patron saint of hospitality
jupartie, *sb.* (OF *giu parti*), jeopardy, danger
jurdon, *sb.* (etym. obscure; cf. LL *jurdanus*), glass vessel used in chemical and medical tests. See note on VI 305f.
juste, *sb.* (OF *juste*), encounter on horseback; usually **justes,** tournament
justen (OF *juster*), joust, engage in a tournament; **justen atte fan,** see note on VI 42
juwise, *sb.* (OF *juise*), judgment, penalty

K

kaityf, *sb.* (AF *caitif*), wretch
kalkule, *v.* (F *calculer*), calculate
kamuse, *adj.* (OF *camus*), pug
kan, *pres. sg. of* **konne.** See § 91
kanstow, canst thou
katapuce, *sb.* (F *catapuce*), caper-spurge
Kaukasous, Caucasus
kaynard, *sb.* (F *cagnard*), sluggard
kechyl, *sb.* (OE *cīcil, cēcil*, prob. related to *cake*), little cake
keen, *sb. pl.* (OE *cū*, f.; pl. *cȳ*, Sth pl. *cȳn*, K *ceen*), cows
keep, *sb.* (cf. OE *cēpan*, v.), heed, care
keepe, *v.* (late OE *cēpan*), take care of, preserve
kembe, *v.* (OE *cemban*, W I), comb.; **kembd,** *pp.*; **kembde,** *pret.*, smoothed (fig.), V 560
kempe, *sb.* (cf. ON *kampr*, beard whisker), coarse, bristling (of hair)
kepe, *sb.* See **keep**
kepen, *v.* (late OE *cēpan*, W I), keep, hold, watch, take care of
kerve, *v.* (OE *ceorfan*, S III), carve, cut
keste, *pret. of* **casten.**
kirtel, *sb.* (OE *cyrtel*, m.), tunic
kithe, *v.* (OE *cȳðan*, W I), show
kitte, *v.* (not recorded in OE or any WG dialect; perh. from **cutian*, **cyttan*, anal. to OE *scyttan*), cut
knakke, *sb.* (etym. obscure), trick, artifice
knarre, *sb.* (LG *knarren*, Du *knar*, knot or knob), thickset fellow
knarry, *adj.* (cf. Du *knar*), gnarled, knotty
knave, *sb.* (OE *cnafa*, m.), boy, servant
knede, *v.* (OE *cnedan*, S V), knead
knee, *sb.* (OE *cnēo, cnēow*, n.), **knowes,** knees
knette. See **knytte**
knotte, *sb.* (OE *cnotta*, m.), main point of a story
knowes. See **knee**
knowestow, knowest thou
knyght, *sb.* (OE *cniht*, m.), knight; **knyght of the shire,** member of Parliament for a county
knytte, *v.* (OE *cnyttan*, W I), knit, join, agree, bind; **knette,** Kentish; for astrological use, see note on II 295–319
konne, *v.* (OE *cunnan*, § 91), can, know, know how, learn, have experience of, understand

konnyng, *sb.* (cf. OE *oncunnung*, f.), ability, skill; **konnyngly,** *adv.*, skilfully
korven, *pp. of* **kerve.** See § 60
koude, kouthe, *pret. of* **konne.** See § 91
kynd, *sb.* (OE *cynd*, n.), kind, nature, inclination, the natural world; **of kynde,** by nature; **of propre kynde,** according to one's disposition
kyndely, *adj.*, *adv.* (OE *gecyndelīc*), natural, naturally
Kynges Note, the name of a song (unknown), I 3217
kynn, *sb.* (OE *cynn*, n.), kind; **alles kynnes,** *gen.*, of every kind
kynrede, *sb.* (OE *cynrǣden, cynrēd*, n.), kindred
kyte, *sb.* (OE *cȳta*, m.), kite, a bird of the falcon family

L

laas, *sb.* (OF *las*), lace, cord, snare
labbyng, *p. adj.* (onomatopoetic form), blabbing
Lacedomye, Lacedæmon, Sparta
lacerte, *sb.* (OF *lacerte*), muscle
lad, *pp.* **ladde,** *pret. of* **lede.**
Ladomya, Laodamia
laft, lafte, *pp. and pret. of* **leve**
lake, *sb.* (prob. fr. Du *laken*), fine white linen
lampe, *sb.* (OF *lame*, L *lamina*), a thin plate of metal
Lancelot de Lake, title of one of the Arthurian romances
Laodomya, Laodamia
lappe, *sb.* (OE *læppa, lappa*, m.), fold or edge of garment; lap, I 686; cloth, IV 585
large, *adj.* (OF *large*), large, great, generous, free; **at thy large,** at thy will; **at his large,** at liberty; also *adv.*, broadly, I 734
largely, *adv.* (see **large**), largely, fully
lasse, *adj. comp.* (OE *lǣssa*), less
last, *sb.* (OE *hlæst*, n.), load. See note on VII 1628
lat, *imper.*, **laten,** *pret. pl. of* **lete.** See § 74
lathe, *sb.* (ON *hlaþa*), barn
laton, *sb.* (OF *laton*), latten, a compound metal resembling brass
laude, *sb.* (OF *laude*), praise
laughe, *v.* (OE *hliehhan*, Ang *hlæhhan*, S VI), laugh
launcegay, *sb.* (OF *lancegaye*), a kind of lance. See note on VII 1942
launde, *sb.* (OF *launde*), an open space in woods
laurere, *sb.* (F *laurier*), laurel
lauriat, *adj.* (L *laureatus*), crowned with laurel
laus, *adj.* (cf. ON *lauss*), loose (Nth)
lavour, *sb.* (OF *laveoir, lavur*, L *lavatorium*), wash basin or water jug
lawe, *sb.* (OE *lagu*, f.), creed, II 221; law, II 223
lawriol, *sb.* (F *laureole*), spurge-laurel
lay[1], *sb.* (OF *lei*), law, creed, faith
lay[2], *sb.* (OF *lai*), lay, a short poem intended to be sung
layneres, *sb. pl.* (F *laniere*), straps
lazar, *sb.* LL *lazarus*), leper
leche, *sb.* (OE *lǣce*, m.), doctor
lechecraft, *sb.* (OE *lǣce-cræft*, m.), medical skill, medicine, remedy
lechour, *sb.* (OF *lecheor*), lecher
lede, *v.* (OE *lǣdan*, W I), lead, carry bring; **leden forth,** continue
leden, *sb.* (OE *lǣden*, n.), language
leed, *sb.* (OE *lēad*, n.), large kettle or cauldron
leef, lief, *adj.*, *sb.* (OE *lēof*), dear; eager, VI 760; **leeve,** *voc. sg.*, VI 731, V 1607; *pl.*, V 341; **lief ne levere,** as dear or dearer, V 572
leefful, *adj.* See **leveful**
leek, *sb.* (OE *lēac*, n.), leek
leere, *sb.* (OE *lira*, m., prob. infl. by *hlēor*), flesh
leere, *v.* (OE *lǣran*, W I), learn, teach
leet, *pret. of* **lete.** See § 74
lefsel, *sb.* (perhaps OE *leaf*, n. + *sele*, m., hall), bower of leaves
legende, *sb.* (F *legende*, LL *legenda*, what is to be read), story of a saint's life
legge, *v.* (OE *lecgan*, W I), lay
lemaille, *sb.* (OF *limaille*), metal filings

leme, *sb.* (OE *lēoma,* m.), flame
lemes, *sb. pl.* (OE *lim,* n.), limbs
lemman, *sb.* m. *or* f. (OE *lēof* + *monn*), lover, sweetheart, mistress
lene, *v.* (OE *lǣnan,* W I), lend
lenger, *adj., adv., comp.* (OE *lengra*), longer
Leon (L *leo*), a zodiacal sign. See p. 135
Lepe, a town in Spain
lepynge, *pres. p.* (OE *hlēāpan,* W VII), running, rushing
lere, *v.* (OE *lǣran,* W I), learn; **lered,** *pp.,* learned
lese, *v.* (OE *lēosan,* S II), lose
lest, *sb.* See **lust**
lest, *v.* See **list**
lesyng, *sb.* (OE *lēāsung,* f.), lying, deceit; **lesynges,** *pl.,* lies
lesynge, *sb.* (cf. v. **lese**), loss, losing
lete, *v.* (OE *lǣtan,* S VII), let, leave, abandon, cause; **leet doon cryen,** caused to be proclaimed
lette, *sb.* (cf. v. **letten**), delay, IV 300
letten, *v.* (OE *lettan,* W I), hinder, prevent, impede, delay, desist, cease, refrain from
Lettow, Lithuania
letuarie, *sb.* (OF *letuaire*), medicinal conserve
leve, *sb.* (OE *lēaf,* f.), leave, permission
leve, *adj.* (OE *lēof*), dear
leve[1], v. (OE *lēfan,* W I), grant, permit; VII 1873
leve[2], *v.* (OE *lǣfan,* W I), leave, leave off, cease
leve[3], *v.* (OM *lēfan,* WS *līefan,* W I), believe
leveful, *adj.* (*leve* + *-ful*), permissible
levene, *sb.* (etym. obscure; cf. OE *līg,* m.), lightning
levere, *adj., comp.* (OE comp. *lēofra*), dearer, rather; *with impers. v. and dat.,* I 293; VI 615; *with* **have** *and subj. nom.,* VII 3083, 4310; V 683, 692, 1360; **had hire levere,** she had rather, IV 444
lewed, *adj.* (OE *lǣwed*), ignorant wicked, base; **lewedly,** *adv.;* **kan but lewedly,** does not know much
lewednesse, *sb.* (cf. OE *lǣwed,* adj.), foolishness
leye, *v.* (OE *lecgan,* W I), lay, VIII 596; wager, I 4009; **leyd,** *pret.*
leyser, *sb.* (OF *leisir*), leisure, opportunity
leysinges, *sb. pl.* See **lesynge**
libel, *sb.* (OF *libel,* m.), written statement of complaint
Libra (L *libra*), a zodiacal sign. See p. 135
licenciat, *sb.* (LL *licentiatus*), licentiate, licensed to receive confessions and to grant absolutions
licour, *sb.* (OF *licour*), moisture, juice
lief. See **leef**
lifly, lyvely, *adv.* (OE *līf,* n. + *-ly*), realistically, I 2087
lige, *adj.* (OF *lige*), loyal; **lige man,** vassal; **lige lord,** liege lord; **liges,** *sb. pl.,* vassals
liggen, *v.* (OE *licgan,* S V), lie
lighte[1], *v.* (cf. *alyghte*), alight, dismount
lighte[2], *v.* (OE *līhtan,* W I), make glad, feel glad
lighten[3], *v.* (OE *līhtan,* W I), light, shine, illumine; **lighte,** *pret. sg.* VII 1661
lightnen, *v.* (cf. **lighten**), enlighten, illumine
ligne, *sb.* (OF *ligne;* cf. OE *līne,* f.), line, lineal descent
liken, *v.* (OE *līcian,* W II), like, please; **liketh,** *impers. pres.;* **us liketh yow,** we are pleased with you
likerous, *adj.* (AF **likerous*), wanton; coquettish, I 3244; eager, V 1119
liklihede, *sb.* (OE *gelīclic* + *-hǣd*), likelihood
lisse, *sb.* (OE *liss,* f.), relief, alleviation
lissen, *v.* (OE *lissian,* W II), relieve
list, *v. impers.* (OE *lystan,* Kentish *lestan,* W I), pleases (with dat.); *also* **lest**
lite, *adj., adv.* (OE *lȳt*), little, small; **a lite,** *also sb.*
lith, *sb.* (OE *lið,* m., n.), limb
lixt, liest. See note on III 1618
lodemenage, *sb.* (AF *lodmanage;* cf. OE, *lādmann*), pilotage

loft, *sb.* (cf. Dan *loft*), loft; **on lofte,** aloft, on high; **kepte . . . on lofte,** supported
logge, *sb.* (OF *loge*), shed
logge, *v.* (OF *logier*), lodge, entertain; **loggyng,** *sb.*, quarters
loken, *pp.* (OE *lūcan*, S II), enclosed
lollere, *sb.* (var. of Lollard, MDu *lollaerd*), Lollard. See note on II 1170–83
lond, *sb.* (OE *land*, *lond*, n.), land, plain, country; **upon lond,** in the country
longes, *sb. pl.* (OE *lungen*, f.), lungs
loode sterre, *sb.* (OE *lād*, f. + *steorra*, m.), lodestar, the guiding star
loos, *sb.* (OF *los*, *loos*), honor, fame
Looth, Lot
looth, *adj.* (OE *lāð*), loath, hateful, unpleasant; **lothest,** most unwilling
lordynges, *sb. pl.* (OE *hlāford*, m. + *-ing*), sirs
lorel, *sb.* (cf. OE *loren*, pp. of *lese*), rogue
lorn, *pp. of* **lese.** See § 57
losien, *v.* (OE *losian*, W II), lose
lough, *adj.* (ON *lāgr*), low
lough, *pret. of* **laughe.** See § 73
louryng, *p. adj.* (*lour*, perh. OE **lūrian* + *-ing*), frowning
loute, *v.* (OE *lūtan*, S II, later wk.), bow, bow down
lowke, *sb.* (etym. obscure), confederate, "fence"
Loy, Eligius. See note on I 119–162
luce, *sb.* (OF *lus*, *luce*), luce, pike
Lucresse, Lucretia
lust, *sb.* (OE *lyst*, f.), pleasure, delight, desire
lust, *v. impers.* (OE *lystan*, W I pleases, *3 sg. pres.*, IV 322, V 147
lustiheed, *sb.* (cf. OE *lyst*, f.), enjoyment, pleasure
lustynesse, *sb.* (cf. OE *lyst*, f.), pleasure, gaiety
luxurie, *sb.* (OF *luxurie*), lust
lyard, *sb.* (OF *liart*), grey, applied especially to horses
lych-wake, *sb.* (OE *līc*, n. + *wacu*, f.), wake, watch kept at night over a dead body
Lyde, Lydia, in Asia Minor
lye, *v.* (OE *līgian*), blaze (III 1142)
lyes, *sb. pl.* (F *lie*), dregs, sediment
Lyeys, Ayas, in Armenia; surrendered in 1361 to Pierre de Lusignan, who also drove the Saracens out of it in 1367
lyf, *sb.* (OE *līf*, n.), life; **lyve,** *dat.*; **on lyve,** alive; **lyves,** *gen. used as adj.*, living, alive, IV 903
Lygurge, Lycurgus
lyme, *v.* (cf. OE *sb. līm*, m.; perh. fr. v. **līmian*), cover with bird lime
lymytacioun, *sb.* (cf. F *limitation*, L *limitationem*), district allotted to a friar
lymytour, *sb.* (cf. F *limite*), limiter, a friar licensed to beg within certain limits
lynde, *sb.* (OE *lind*, str. f., *linde*, wk. f.), linden tree
Lynyan, Giovanni di Lignano, a famous Italian jurist and writer on philosophy
lyst, *sb.* (OE *hlyst*, m.), ear
lystes, *sb. pl.* (OE *līst*, m.), lists
lytarge, *sb.* (OF *litarge*), litharge, lead protoxide ointment
lyvely. See **lifly**
lyveree, *sb.* (OF *livree*), livery, dress, distinctive of all the members of a household or gild

M

maade, *pret. of* **maken**
Macrobeus, Macrobye, Macrobius. See note on VII 4313ff.
madde, *v.* (cf. OE *mædd*, pp. of *mǣdan*), be angry
magyk, *sb.* (OF *magique*). See note on I 414ff.
Mahoun, Mohammed
maister, *adj.* (OF *maistre*), chief, main; **maister strete,** principal thoroughfare, I 2902
maistow, mayst thou
maistrie, *sb.* (OF *maistrie*), authority, control, skill
make, *sb.* (OE *maca*, m.), mate, opponent
maken, *v.* (OE *macian*, W II), make,

cause, compose (poetry); **doon make,** cause to be made; **lat maken,** caused to be made; pret. **makede** and **made**

making, *sb.* (OE *macung*, f. fr. *macian*, W II), composition

Makomete. Mohammed

male, *sb.* (OF *male*), bag, wallet

malencolie, *sb.* (OF *melancolie*), black bile, one of the four humours

malencolik, *adj.* (cf. F *melancolique*). See note on I 333

mandementz, *sb. pl.* (OF *mandement*), commandments

maner, *sb.* (AF *manere*), kind (of). See § 113

mansion, *sb.* (OF *mansion*), house; for astrological uses, see pp. 140–42 and note on V 1130ff.

mantel, *sb.* (OF *mantel*), mantle; **foot-mantel,** I 472, riding skirt

manye, *sb.* (*manie*), mania

mappemounde, *sb.* (F *mappemonde*, fr. L *mappa mundi*), map of the world

Marcien, *adj.* (L *Martius*), Martian, having the temperament due to the influence of the planet Mars

mareys, *sb.* (OF *mareis*), marsh

mark, *sb.* (OE *mearc*, n.), race, III 696

market-betere, *sb.* (late OE *market* + *beater*), loafer at markets

Marrok, Morocco

mary, *sb.* (OE *mearg*, *mearh*, n., m.), marrow

marybones, *sb. pl.* (OE *mearh*, n., m. + *bān*, n.), marrow bones

masse-penny, *sb.* (OE *mæsse*, f. + *pening*, m.), offering. See note on III 1749

mat, *adj.* (OF *mat*, mated at chess), exhausted, overcome

mathinketh, *v. 3 sg. imp.* (*me* + OE *of* + *þyncan*, seem, W I), it repents me, i.e., I am sorry

maugree, mawgree, *prep.* (OF *maugre*), in spite of, notwithstanding; **maugree youre heed,** in spite of all you can do, VII 4602

Maumetrye, *sb.* (*maumet* [OF *mahumet*, idol] + *-ry*), idolatry

maunciple, *sb.* (OF *manciple*), provision buyer in a college or inn of court

mawe, *sb.* (OE *maga*, m.), maw, stomach

mawgree. See **maugree**

mayde, *sb.* (shortened fr. *mayden*, OE *mægden*, n.), virgin; used of a man, III 79

maydenhede, *sb.* (OE *mægden* + **hād*), virginity

maystow, maistow, *2 sg. pres.* of **mowen.** See § 91

mazelyn, *sb.* (OF *maselin*), bowl of maple wood

me, men, *indef. pro.* (reduced from OE *man*), one, somebody

mede [1], *sb.* (OE *mēd*, f.), reward

mede [2], **meeth,** *sb.* (OE *meodu*, m., n.), mead, a drink made of fermented honey

medle, *v.* (OF *medler*), mix

medlee, *sb.* (OF *medlee*), cloth of mixed weave. See note on I 328

meenes, *sb. pl.* (cf. OF adj. *men*), means

meest, *adj., adv.* (OE *mǣst*), most

meeth. See **mede** [2]

Meleagree, Meleager

melle, *sb.* (OE *mylen;* cf. Sw *mölla*, Dan *melle*), a mill

men. See **me**

Mercenrike, Mercia

meridional, *adj.* (F *meridional*); for astrological use, see note on V 263

merk, *sb.* (OE *mearc*, Ang *merc*, f. and n.), image, V 880

meschance, *sb.* (OF *mesch[e]ance*), misfortune; **with meschance,** curses on her, II 896; with curses, I 4412

meschief, *sb.* (OF *meschief*), misfortune, distress

message, *sb.* (F *message*), message, messenger; *pl.*, IV 738

messedays, days when the mass is sung

mester, myster, mystiers, *sb.* (OF *mester*, *mestier*), trade, occupation, kind, sort

mesuage, *sb.* (AF *mesuage*, prob. graphic corruption of obs. F *mesnage*), site for a dwelling

mesurable, *adj.* (F *mesurable*), temperate
mete, *sb.* (OE *mete*, m.), meat, food; dinner, I 348
mete, *adj.* (OE *gemǣte*), suitable
mete, *v.* (OE *mǣtan*, W I), dream; **me mette,** *pret. sg. impers.*, I dreamt; **hym mette,** *pret. sg. impers.*, he dreamt
Methamorphosios, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
mewe, muwe, *sb.* (OF *mue*), cage for hawks; coop for fattening fowls, I 349
mexcuse, me excuse
meynee, *sb.* (OF *meyne*), household, servants, company
ministre, *sb.* (OF *ministre*), magistrate
mirre, *sb.* (OF *mirre*), myrrh
mis, *adj.* (partly prefix *mis-*, partly reduced fr. *amiss, a-* + *miss*, OE *missan*), wrong, bad
miteyn, *sb.* (F *mitaine*), mitten
mo, *adj., comp.* (OE *mā*), more, besides, others; **tymes mo,** other times; another, IV 1039; also *adv.*, more
moevere, *sb.* (cf. OF v. *moevent*), mover, cause
moeving, firste, the *primum mobile*
montance, *sb.* (OF *montance*), amount, value
moote, *v.* (OE *mōtan*, pp.), must, shall, ought; **so moot I theen,** so may I thrive; **as moote I . . .,** *pres. subj.*, so may I
mormal, *sb.* (OF *mortmal*), inflamed sore
mortal, *adj.* (OF *mortal*), mortal, deadly, relentless
mortreux, *sb. pl.* (OF *mortreux*), stews. See note on I 384
morwe, *sb.* (OE *morgen*, m.), morrow, morning; **by the morwe,** in the early morning; **in the morwe tyde,** early in the morning; **morwe song,** morning song
morwenynge, *sb.* (*morwen* fr. OE *morgen*, m. + *-ing*), morning
mostou, must thou
motyf, *sb.* (F *motif*), idea
mountenaunce, *sb.* See **montance**
moustre, *sb.* (OF *moustre*), pattern, example
mowen, *v.* (OE *magan*, pp.), may, be able
mowleñ, *v.* (perh. after F v. *mouler*), mould
moyste, moysty, *adj.* (OF *moiste*), moist; soft, I 457; new, VII 1954, VI 315
much, *adj., sb.* (shortened fr. *muchel*), much; **muche and lite,** high and low, I 494
muchel, *adj.* (OE *mycel, micel*), much, great; also *adv.*
multiplie, *v.* (OF *multiplier*, L *multiplicare*), increase the amount of precious metal by transmutation of a baser metal
murie, myrie, *adj.* (OE *myrige*), merry, pleasant, sweet; **murier,** *comp. adv.*, VII 4460
murierly, *adv. comp.* (cf. OE *mirige*), more merrily
muwe. See **mewe**
Myda, Midas
mynne, *v.* (ON *minna*), remember
myrie. See **murie**
mysavyse, *v. refl.* (*mis-* + F *aviser*), be ill advised
mysboden, *pp.* (OE *misbēodan*, S II), injured, ill treated
myscarie, *v.* (OF *meskarier*), come to harm, go astray
mysdeme, *v.* (cf. ON *misdæma*), misjudge
mysdeparten, *v.* (*mis-* + *depart*), distribute wrongly
myster, mystiers. See **mester**
myte[1], *sb.* (OE *mite*, f.), mite, any minute insect
myte[2], *sb.* (MDu *mijte*), thing of small value, small coin

N

na, *adv.* (OE *nā*), no (Nth)
nadstow, ne hadst thou, hadst thou not
nakerer, *sb.* (cf. OF *nakaire*), performer on the kettledrum
nameliche, namely, *adv.* (OE *nama*,

m. + *-lice*), namely, especially, particularly

namo, namoore, *pro. adj., adv.* (OE *nā, mā*), no more

narette (*ne* + *arette*), *v.* See **aretten**

narwe, *adj.* (OE *nearu*), narrow, small

nas, contraction of *ne was*

nat, contraction of *ne at,* II 290

nat, contraction of *ne wot,* knows not

nat, *adv.* (OE *nāwiht, nāht,* n.), not, by no means, not at all

nathelees, *adv.* (OE *nā þȳ lās*), nevertheless

nay, *adv.* (Icel *nei*), nay, no; **it is no nay,** there is no denying

ne, *adv., conj.* (OE *ne*), not

nece, *sb.* (F *nece*), kinswoman, niece or cousin

neddre, *sb.* (OE *nædre,* f.), serpent

nede, nedes, *adv.* (OM *nēdes,* WS *nīēdes,* gen.), necessarily; **nedes-cost** (ON *kostr*), **nedely,** necessarily

neer, *adv. comp.* (OE comp. *nēar*), nearer; **ner and ner,** nearer and nearer

neet, *sb.* (OE *nēat,* n.), cattle

nempnen, *v.* (OE *nemnan,* W I), name, mention

nere, contraction of *ne were,* were not

newefangel, *adj.* (ME *newe* + *fangel;* OE stem *fang-* fr. v. *fōn*), fond of novelty

next, *adj.* (OE *nēahst, nīehst*), nearest, II 807, 1814

nifles, *sb. pl.* (etym. obscure; cf. LL *nichil,* perh. infl. by *trifle*), silly stories

niste, contraction of *ne wiste, pret. of* **witen.** See § 91

noble, *sb.* (F *noble*), noble, an English coin first minted by Edward III, value 6s. 8d.

noblesse, *sb.* (OF *noblesse*), nobleness, magnificence, honor

nobleye, *sb.* (F *nobleye*), nobility

noël, nowel, *sb.* (OF *noel,* L *natalem*), birthday (shouted or sung at Christmas to commemorate the birth of Christ)

nof, contraction of *ne of*

noght, *sb.* (OE *nāwiht,* n.), not a whit, nothing

nolde, contraction of *ne wolde,* would not

nones, *adj., sb.* (OE *for þām ānes*), expressly, for the purpose (often only a metrical tag for the rhyme)

noon, *pro. adj.* (OE *nān*), no, no one, none

norice, *sb.* (OF *norice*), nurse

norissed, *pp., adj.* (OF stem *noriss-,* the strengthened form of *norir*), brought up

norissyng, *sb.* (cf. **norissed**), bringing up

nortelrie, *sb.* (irreg.; cf. OF *nourture*), education

nosethirl, *sb.* (OE *nos,* f. + *þyrl,* n.), nostril

nostow, contraction of *ne wostow,* dost thou not know

not, contraction of *ne wot, pret. of* **witen**

notabilitee, *sb.* (OF *notabilite*), notable

note, *sb.* (OF *note,* L *nota*), note, tune, song; cf. **Kynges Note**

note, *sb.* (OE *notu,* f.), business, I 4068

note muge, *sb.* (OE *hnutu,* f. + OF *mugue;* prob. adapted fr. OF **nois mugue*), nutmeg

not-heed, *sb.* (OE adj. *hnot* + *hēafod,* n.), crop-head, head with closely cropped hair

nothyng, *sb.* (OE *nāðing*), nothing; *used as adv.,* in no respect, not at all

novys, *sb.* (OF *novisse, novice*), novice, a candidate for admission into a religious order

nouche, *sb.* (OF *nouche*), jewelled ornament

nowel. See **noël**

nowthe, *adv.* (OE *nūðā*), now; **as nowthe,** just now

nyce, *adj.* (OF *nice*), scrupulous, foolish

nycetee, *sb.* (OF *nicete*), folly, stupidity

nyghtertale, *sb.* (cf. ON *nāttartale* and *nāttarþel;* form and meaning confused in Eng. word), night-time; **by nyghtertale,** in the night-time

nyl, contraction of *ne wil*, will not
nyn, contraction of *ne in*
nys, contraction of *ne is*

O

o, *adj.* (OE *ān*), a, one, a single
obeisant, *adj.* (F *obeissant*), obedient
obeissance, *sb.* (OF *obeissance*), obedience, submission, obedient or courteous act
occupien, *v.* (OF *occuper*), seize upon
octogamye, *sb.* (on the analogy of *bigamy*), marrying eight times
Octovyan, Octavius Caesar
of, *prep.* (OE *of*), of, for, by, at, about, in, in respect to, from, off, with, out of
offertorie, *sb.* (L *offertorium*), offertory, an antiphon sung while the faithful are making their offerings for the support of the church
office, *sb.* (AF and OF *office*), office, duty, employment; property, III 1144; **houses of office**, storerooms, IV 264
of-showve, *v.* (OE *scūfan*, S II), push away violently
ofter, *adv. comp.* (OE comp. *oftor*), oftener
of-thowed, *pp.*, *adj.* (OE *þāwian*, W II), melted away
oght, *indef. pro.* (OE *āwiht*, *āht*), anything; *adv.*, at all, VII 1792
oghte, *pret. of* **owen**. See § 91
omelie, *sb.* (F *omelie*, L *homilia*), homily
on, *prep.* (OE *on*), on, in, at
ones, *adv.* (OE *ānes*), once; **al ones**, of one mind; **atanes** (Nth), **atones**, at one time
onethe, *adv.* See **unnethes**
oon, *num.* (OE *ān*), one, the same; **after oon**, the same, equally good; **evere in oon**, ever the same; **oon and oon**, one by one; **at on**, together; **in oon**, the same
open-heveded, *adj.* (OE *open* + *hēafod*, n.), bareheaded
operacion, *sb.* (OF *operation*), experiment, calculation
opposen, *v.* (F *opposer*), lay to the charge of
opposicion, *sb.* (F *opposition*), opposition; for astrological use, see p. 140
oratorie, *sb.* (L *oratorium*, OF *oratoire*), chapel or small room set apart for private devotions
ordinance, *sb.* (OF *ordenance*), order, arrangement
Orewelle, the Orwell, a river in Suffolk
original, *sb.* (F *original*), origin, source
orison, *sb.* (OF *orison*), prayer
orloge, orlogge, *sb.* (OF *orloge*), clock
orpiment, *sb.* (L *orpimentum*), orpiment, trisulphide of arsenic
ouche. See **nouche**
oule, *sb.* (OE *ūle*, f.), owl
ounce, *sb.* (F *once*), ounce, small bunch
oundye, *adj.* (F *onde*), wavy
oure, *sb.* (OF *ure*, *ore*, L *hora*), hour
outen, *v.* (OE *ūtian*, W II), utter; show, III 521
out-hees, *sb.* (early ME *ūthēs* [OE, **uthās*]), outcry, clamour
outher, *conj.* (OE *āghwæðer*, *āwðer*, *āðer*), either; **outher . . . or**, either . . . or
outrely, *adv.* (conformed to ME *out*, *outer*, rather than OE *ūterra*), utterly, absolutely
outreye, *v.* (OF *outreier*), fall into a passion
outridere, *sb.* (*out* + *ridere*), outrider. See note on I 166
out-twyne, *v.* (cf. OE sb. *twīn*, n., and cognate Gmc forms), spin out
out-yede, *v. pret.* (OE *ūtēode*), went out
over, *adj.* (OE *ofer*), upper; **overeste**, *sup.*, outer, I 290
over-al, *adv.* (OE *ofer* + *al*), everywhere; **over-al ther**, wherever
overeste. See **over**
overlad, *pp.* (OE *ofer* + *lædan*, W I), browbeaten
overmacche, *v.* (*over* + *match* [cf. OE sb. *gemæcca*, m.]), be more than a match for, IV 1220
overslope, *sb.* (OE *oferslop*, n. fr.

over + *slop*, n., smock), cassock, gown

overthwart, *adv.* (ME *over* + *þwert*, fr. ON, *þvert*), across

Ovydes Art, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*

owen, *v.* (OE *āgan*, § 91), owe, own, ought, be necessary; **us oghte, hire oghte,** *impers.*

owher, owghwhere, *adv.* (OE *āhwǣr*), anywhere

Oxenford, Oxford

oynement, *sb.* (OF *oignement*), ointment

P

pace, *v.* (cf. OF sb. *pas*, L *passum*), proceed, surpass

Padowe, Padua

page, *sb.* (OF *page*), boy attendant, or in training for knighthood; also male servant of low rank; **a propre page,** a fine boy, I 3972

Palatye, Balat, in Asia Minor. According to Livon, King of Armenia, who visited England in 1385, the lord of Palatye was a Christian, doing homage to Amurath the Turk (Froissart, ed. Buchon, bk. III, chap. xxv; Johnes' transl. III, 23)

palfrey, (OF *palefrei*), well-trained riding horse

palled, *pp.*, *adj.* (app. aphetic fr. *appal;* but cf. cognate v. *pale* fr. adj. *pale*), pale

palmer, *sb.* (OF *palmier*), palmer. See note on I 13

Pamphilus, Pamphilus. See note on V 1110

pan, *sb.* (OE *panne*), skull

panade, *sb.* (cf. OF *pann-, pan-, penard*), cutlass

panter, *sb.* (OF *panter*), fowling net

pape, *sb.* (OE *pāpa*, m. fr. L *papa*), pope

papejay, *sb.* (OF *papegai*), a parrot or a woodpecker

parage, *sb.* (F *parage*), lineage

paramentz, parementz, *sb.* (OF *parament*), rich hangings

paramour, *sb.* (F *par amour*), love, lover, mistress; **for paramour,** for love, VII 2033; **paramour, paramours,** *adv.*, passionately

parcel, *sb.* (F *parcelle*), part

pardee (OF *par de*), verily, certainly (a common asseveration)

pardoner, pardoneer, *sb.* (AF *pardoner*), pardoner. See note on I 543

parementz, *sb.* See **paramentz**

parfay, *interj.* (AF *par fay*), by my faith

parfit, *adj.* (OF *parfait, parfit*), perfect; **parfitly,** *adv.*

parfourne, *v.* (OF *parfournir*), perform, execute

parisshen, *sb.* (OF *paroissien*), parishioner

paritorie, *sb.* (AF *paritarie*), pellitory of the wall (medicinal herb)

parten, *v.* (perh. sb. *part*, L *partem*, + *-en*), share with

Parthes, Parthians

party, *adj.* (F *parti*), mingled, I 1053

parvys, *sb.* (F *parvis*, or LL *parvisiae*). For meaning, see note on I 310

pas, *sb.* (OF *pas*), pace, step, gait; **a paas,** apace; **a litel moore than paas,** a little faster than a walk

passant, *adj.* (cf. F *passant*, pres. p. of *passer*), surpassing, excelling

passyng, *adv.* (*pass* + *-ing*), very, exceedingly

patente, *sb.* (OF *patente*), letter patent, I 315; papal license, VI 337

patrone, *sb.* (F *patron*), pattern

pay, *sb.* (OF *paie*), content, pleasure

paye, *v.* (OF *paier*), please

payen, *adj.*, *sb.* (OF *paien*, L *paganus*), pagan

payndemayn, *sb.* (OF *pain demeine*, LL *panis dominicus*), the finest white bread. See note on VII 1914–25

pecunyal, *adj.* (L *pecunialis*), pecuniary

Pedmark, Penmark, a district in Brittany

peert, *adj.* (cf. OF *apert*, L *apertus*), saucy

Pegasee, Pegasus

peire, *sb.* (F *paire*), set (not limited to two

peler, *sb.* (OF *piler*), pillar

Pemond, Piedmont, a district in northern Italy

penant, *sb.* (OF *penant*), penitent

Penmark. See Pedmark

Penneus, Peneus

penoun, *sb.* (OF *penon*), pennon, ensign of the knight-bachelor or knight who had not reached the dignity of the banneret

penyble, *adj.* (F *penible*, fr. *peine*), painstaking

percely, *sb.* (OF *peresil*, *persil*), parsley

percen, *v.* (OF *percer*), pierce, stab

peregryn, *adj.*(L *peregrinus*), pilgrim: **faucon peregryn,** peregrine falcon

perejonette, *adj.* (OE *pere*, *peru*, f. + F *Jeannet;* cf. F *poire de la Saint Jean*), early pear

perled, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. F *perle*), studded as with pearls

permutacioun, *sb.* (OF *permutacion*), alteration

perrye, *sb.* (OF *pierrie*, *pierie*, fr. *pierre*, stone), precious stones

pers, *sb.* (OF *pers*), cloth of a blue-gray color

persone, *sb.* (OF *persone*), parsøn, parish priest; person, I 521, IV 73

pesen, *sb. pl.* (OE *pise*, f., pl. *pisan*), peas

pestilence, *sb.* (OF *pestilence*), plague, curse, mischief, harm (in a general sense); time of plague, I 442, VI 679

Peter, a common oath

Petrak, Petrarch

peyne, pyne, *sb.* (OF *peine*), pain, punishment, suffering; **dide his payne,** did his utmost, V 730

peyne, *v.* (OF *pener*, F *peiner*), take pains, endeavor (reflex.)

peytrel, *sb.* (AF *peitrel*, L *pectorale*, breastplate), collar for horse (originally a breastplate)

Phisiologus, *Physiologus* (title of a book about animals by Theobaldus)

phislyas, *sb.*, *corruption of* **filaz, filace.** See note on II 1189

phitonissa, *sb.* (LL *phitonissa*), pythoness, prophetess; Phitonissa, the witch of Endor, III 1510

pichen, *v.* (etym. obscure; cf. OE **piccean*), pitch; **pighte,** *pret.*

Pictagoras, Pythagoras

pie, *sb.* (F, *pie*), magpie

piggesnye, *sb.* (ME *pigges* + *neyge* = OE *eyge*, n.), darling. See note on I 3268

pighte, *pret. of* **pichen.**

piled, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. OE *pilian*, W II, prob. fr. L, *pilare*), bald, scanty

pilour, *sb.* (OF *pilour*), pillager

pilwe beer, *sb.* (OE *pyle*, *pilu*, m.? + ME *bere*, etym. obscure), pillow-case

pipen, *v.* (OE *pīpian*, W II), pipe, whistle

Pisces (L *pisces*), a zodiacal sign. See p. 135

pistel, *sb.* (OE *pistol*, m., aphetic fr. *epistol*, L *epistola*), letter, message

pitaunce, *sb.* (OF *pitance*), allowance of food, gift

pitous, *adj.* (OF *pitous*), pious, pitiful

plage, *sb.* (OE *plage*), region

plane, *v.* (F *planer*), smoothe (the wax of a tablet after writing with a style)

plantayne, *sb.* (OF *plantain*), plantain

plat, *adj.* (OF *plat*), flat, plain; **with the plat,** with the flat side of the sword; *adv.*, plainly

plates, *sb. pl.* (OF *plate*), metal plates to strengthen chain mail

plesance, *sb.* (OF *plaisance*), pleasure, joy, amusement, pleasing manner

pleyen, *v.* (OE *plegian*, W II), play, jest, make sport, amuse one's self

pleyn [1], *adj.* (OF *plein*, L, *plenus*), full, perfect, complete; also *adv.*

pleyn [2], *adj.* (OF *plain*, L *planus*), plain, open, clear

Pleyn-damour, name of a romance hero, meaning "full of love"

pleyne, *v.* (OF *plaindre*), complain, lament

pleynly, *adv.* (cf. adj. *pleyn* [2]), plainly, clearly, openly

Pleynt of Kynde, Planctus Naturae (Complaint of Nature), the title of a work by Alanus de Insulis

plight, *pp.*, **plighte,** *pret.* (OE *pluccian*, W II), pulled.

plighte, *v.* (OE *plihtan*, W I), pledge
plite, *sb.* (OE *pliht*, m., *plihte*, f.), unhappy state
plye, *v.* (OF *plier*), mold, bend
Poilleys courser, Apulian courser. Apulia, in Italy, was noted for fine horses
point, *sb.* (F *point*), point, part, object, state, condition; **in good poynt,** in fine condition; **at point devys,** to perfection; **poyntes,** *pl.*, tags, I 3322
pokkes, *sb. pl.* (OE *poc*, m.), pocks
polax, *sb.* (perh. *poll* + *ax*), battle ax
polyve, *sb.* (OF *polie* + *-ive*), pulley
pomel, *sb.* (OF *pomel*), top
pomely, *adj.* (OE *pomelé*), dappled
popelote, *sb.* (perh. OF *poupelet petit poupon*), doll, pet
popet, *sb.* (F *poupette*, dim.), puppet, dainty little person (used ironically), VII 1891
poppere, *sb.* (cf. v. *pop*), small dagger
poraille, *sb.* (OF *pouraille*), poor people
port, *sb.* (F *port*), behavior, bearing
portreitour, *sb.* (prob. AF **portraitour*), portrayer
pose, *sb.* (OE *ge-pos*, n.), cold in the head
pose, *v.* (F *poser*), assume for the sake of argument
possessioner, *sb.* (cf. OF *possessiun*), member of an endowed religious order; (i.e., not a friar)
potage, *sb.* (F *potage*), soup
potente, *sb.* (cf. F *potence*), crutch-like staff
poudre marchant, *sb.* (OF *poudre marcheant*), sour flavoring powder
poure, *adj.* (OF *povre*), poor; **povereste, povrest,** *sup.*; **povreliche,** *adv.*
pouren, *v.* (etym. obscure; perh. OE **purian*), pore; peep, III 1738
poupe, powpe, *v.* (of echoic origin; cf. Gmc dialects), blow
poverte, *sb.* (cf. two OF forms: *poverte* and *poverté*), poverty
poynaunt, *adj.* (OF *poignant*), hot with spices
poyntel, *sb.* (OF *pointel*, L *punctilium*, dot), stylus, stiletto
praktike, *sb.* (OF *practike*), practice
praktisour, *sb.* (prob. fr. AF **practisour*), practitioner
prechestow, preachest thou
predicacion, *sb.* (OF *predicaciun*), sermon, exhortation
preef, preeve, *sb.* (OF *prueve, proeve, preve, proeuve*), proof, test; **with yvel preef,** confound you! III 247
preesse, *v.* (OF *presser*), press, throng
preeve. See **preef**
preferre, *v.* (L *præferre*), precede, surpass
prenostik, *adj.* (LL *prænosticus*), prognostic
prentys, *sb.* (aphetic fr. *apprentice*, OF *aprentis*), apprentice
pres, *sb.* (F *presse*), crowd
presse, *sb.* (F *presse*), press, a machine for pressing or curling, I 81; large cupboard with shelves, I 263, 3212
preve, *v.* (OF *prover;* 3 sg. pres., *prueve*), prove, show, test, try
prighte, *pret. of* **priken.**
prikasour, *sb.* (cf. v. **priken**), hard rider
priken, *v.* (OE *prician*, W II), prick, goad, spur, ride hard, ride
prikke, *sb.* (OE *prica, pricca*, m.; *pricu*, f.), point
prikyng, *sb.* (cf. OE *priccian, priccan*), spurring, hard riding, VII 1965, 1969; tracking a hare by its footprints, I 191, see note there
prime, *sb.* (OE *prim*, L *prima*, OF *prime*), prime (the first period of the day, between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.)
primerole, *sb.* (OF *primerole*), primrose (used figuratively)
principles, *sb. pl.* (F *principe*), innate disposition
pris, *sb.* (OF *pris*), price, prize, esteem, excellence, renown, value
privee, *adj.* (OF *privé*), secret, confidential; **privee, prively,** *adv.*
privetee, *sb.* (OF *privetê*), privacy
proces, *sb.* (F *proces*), process, process of time, course of narrative, story
procuratour, *sb.* (OF *procuratour*), attorney. See note on III 1596

progression, *sb.* (F *progression*), progression, process; **progressions,** processes of production, I 3013
prohemye, *sb.* (OF *proëme*), preface
prolle, *v.* (origin unknown), search for
pronounce, *v.* (OF *pronuncier*), announce
proporcioneles, *sb. pl.* (F *proporcionel*), proportional parts
propre, *adj.* (cf. F *propre*, L *proprius*), proper, own, particular, handsome, fine looking, excellent; **proprely,** *adv.*, literally
propretee, *sb.* (cf. OF *proprieté*), property, peculiarity
prospective, *sb.* (F *prospectif*) the prospective glass with which distant or future events were supposed to be seen
provost, *sb.* (OF and AF *provost*), chief magistrate
prow, *sb.* (OF *pru*, *prou*), benefit
Pruce, Pruyse, Prussia; *adj.*, Prussian
Ptholomee, Ptolemy. See note on III 180–82
pulle, *v.* (OE *pullian*, W II), pull, pluck; **a pulled hen,** *pp.*, *adj.*, a plucked hen
purchace, *v.* (OF *purchacier*) procure, obtain; **purchas,** *sb.* (OF *pourchas*); **purchasour,** *sb.* (OF *purchasour*); **purchasyng,** *sb.* See note on I 256
pure, *adj.*, *adv.* (OF *pure*, f.), absolute, perfect, utterly, entirely; also **purely,** *adv.*
pure, *v.* (OF *purer*), cleanse; **pured,** *pp.*, *adj.*, refined, V 1560
pursevant, *sb.* (OF *pursivant*), pursuivant
purtreye, *v.* (OF *portraire*), draw
purveiaunce, *sb.* (OF *porveance*), providence, provision, III 570
purveye, *v.* (AF *purveier*), provide, prepare
pynchen, *v.* (OF *pincer*, ONF **pinchier*), find fault with; **pynched,** *pp.*, folded, I 151
pyne, *sb.* (OE **pīn*, L, *pœna*), pain, torture
pyne, *v.* (OE *pīnian*, W II), pain, torture

Q

quad, *adj.* (MDu *quad*, *kwaad*), evil, bad
qualm, *sb.* (OE *cwealm*, m., n.), pestilence
queern, *sb.* (OE *cweorn*, f.), hand-mill
quelle, *v.* (OE *cwellan*, W I), kill
quenche, *v.* (OE *cwencan*, W I), quench, destroy, become quenched, die out; **queynte,** *pret.*; **queynt,** *pp.*
quene, *sb.* (OE *cwēn*, f.), queen
queynt, *pp. of* **quenche.**
queynte, *adj.* (OF *cointe*), curious, strange, ingeniously made
quite, *v.* (OF *quite*), repay, requite, release, acquit (one's self); **hast thee wel yquit,** hast done thy part, V 673; **quite youre hire,** repay you, III 1008
quitly, *adv.* (OF adj. *quite* + *-ly*), freely, entirely at liberty
quod, *v. pret.* (OE *cweðan*, S V), quoth, said
quook, *pret. of* **quake** (OE *cwacian*, W II). See § 69
quyk, *adj.* (OE *cwicu*, *cwic*), alive, lively
quyken, *v.* (OE *cwician*, W II), kindle
quynible, *sb.* (irreg. fr. L *quinque*, five, by analogy to *trible*, *treble*), falsetto
quyrboilly, (F *cuir bouilli*), boiled leather

R

raa, *sb.* (cf. ON *ra*, Dan *raa*), roe (Nth)
rad, *pp. of* **reden**
radde, *pret. of* **reden**
rafte, *pret. of* **reve**
rage, *sb.* (OF *rage*), rage; passion of grief, VII 4556, V 836
rage, *v.* (OF *ragier*), frolic, or perhaps, become violent
ragerye, *sb.* (OF *ragerie*), fun
rake-stele, *sb.* (OE *raca*, m., *racu*, f. + OE *stela*, m.), rake-handle
Ram, a zodiacal sign. See p. 135
rape, *sb.* (cf. ON v. *hrapa*), haste
rathe, *adv.* (OE *hrade*), quickly

raughte, *pret. of* **reche**. See § 153
ravisshe, *v.* (F *raviss-*, lengthened stem fr. *ravir*), be carried away with joy; **ravysedest doun**, drew down, VII 1659
ravyne, *sb.* (F *ravine*), prey
Razis, Rhazes, an Arab physician, c. 850–932
real, *adj.* (OF *real*), regal
rebekke, *sb.* (etym. obscure), crone. See note on III 1573
recche [1], *v.* (OE *reccan*, W I), interpret
recche [2], **rekke**, *v.* (OE *rēccan*, W I), reck, care; **hym roghte**, *pret. sg. impers.*, it made no difference to him, IV 685
recchelees, *adj.* (OE *rēccelēas*), vagabond. See note on I 177ff.
receyve, *v.* (F *receveir;* 3 sg. pres. *receive*), receive; for astrological use, II 307, see p. 140
reche, *v.* (OE *rǣcan*, W I), reach; **raughte**, *pret.*
rechelesnesse, *sb.* (OE *reccelēas*, *rēcelēas* + *-nes*), heedlessness
reclayme, *v.* (OF *reclaimer*), call back as a hawk to the lure
reconforte, *v.* (OF *reconforter*), reincourage
recorde, *v.* (OF *recorder*), record, bear witness, remind
recours, *sb.* (F *recours*), return
reddour, *sb.* (ONF *reddur*), sway, power
reden, *v.* (OM *rēdan*, WS *rǣdan*, W I), read, advise; **reed**, *imp.*, VII 4320
redoutynge, *sb.* (F *redouter*), respect, reverence
reed, *sb.* (OM *rēd*, WS *rǣd*, m.), advice, counsel, help
reed, *imp. of* **reden**. See § 84
reft, *pp. of* **reve**.
refut, *sb.* (OF *refuite*), refuge
regarde, *sb.* (F *regard*), look; **at regarde of**, in comparisŏn with
regne, *sb.* (OF *regne*), kingdom
rehercen, *v.* (OF *rehercer*), repeat
rekke, *v.* See **recche** [2]
religioun, *sb.* (AF *religiun*, F *religion*), religion; monastic life, VII 3134, 3144
relyke, *sb.* (F *relique*), relic
reme, *sb.* (OF *reaume*), realm
remewe, *v.* (OF *remuer*), remove
ren, *sb.* (cf. v. **renne**, and Du *ren*, ON *renna*), run
renably, *adv.* (OF *renable* + *-ly*), fluently
reneyen, *v.* (OF *reneier*, LL *renegare*), renounce
renge, *sb.* (OF *renge*), rank
renne, *v.* (ON *renna*), run, go
rennere, *sb.* (cf. v. **renne**), runner
renomee, *sb.* (OF *renomee*), renown
rente, *sb.* (OF *rente*), regular income
rentynge, *sb.* (fr. *rent*, var. of *rend* [OE *rendan*, W I] + *-ing*), tearing
repaire, **repeire**, *v.* (OF *repairer*), return
repleccion, *sb.* (OF *repletion*), repletion, overeating
replicacion, *sb.* (OF *replication*), answer
reportour, *sb.* (OF *reporteur*), umpire, I 814
repplicacion, *sb.* (OF *repplicacion*), reply, retort; **withouten repplicacion**, without protest
repreeve, *sb.* (OF *reprueve*), disgrace
reprevable, *adj.* (cf. F *reprouvable*), reprehensible
repreve, *v.* (OF *reprover;* 3 sg. pres., *repreuve*), reproach
rescus, *sb.* (cf. OF *rescou-*, stem of *rescoure*), rescue, aid
rese, *v.* (OE *hrisian*, W II), shake, tremble
reson, *sb.* (OF *raison*), reason, right; **resons**, *pl.*, opinions, I 274
resoune, *v.* (OF *resoner*), resound
rest, *sb.* (aphetic form of *arest*, OF *areste*), rest
rethor, *sb.* (L *rhetor*, LL *rethor*), rhetorician
reuthe, *sb.* (OE *hrēowð*), pity
reve, *sb.* (OE *gerēfa*, m.), reeve. See note on I 587
reve, *v.* (OE *rēafian*, W II), take from, bereave
reverye (OF *reverie*, rejoicing), delight
rewe, *sb.* (OE *rǣw*, f.), row, order; **a-rewe**, in succession; **by rewe**, one after another

rewel-boon, *sb.* (AF *roal* + *bone*), ivory
reye, *sb.* (OE *ryge*, m.), rye
reyse, *v.* (ON *reisa*), go on a military expedition
ribaudye, *sb.* (OF *ribaudie*), ribaldry
ribibe, *sb.* (OF *rubebe*, *rebebe*), fiddle, an abusive term for an old woman. See note on III 1377
ribible, rubible, *sb.* (OF, *rubebe;* ending perh. infl. by musical terms *trible*, etc.), rebeck, an early type of fiddle
riden, *v.* (OE *rīdan*, S I), ride; **out ride,** go on a military expedition, VII 1940
ridyng, *sb.* (v. *rīde*), procession
right, *sb.* (OE *riht*, n.), justice, I 3089
rist, *v. 3 sg. pres. for* riseth
rit, *3 sg. pres. of* **riden.** See § 80
river, *sb.* (F *riviere*), river; **ryver,** hawking ground by a river, V 1196; **for river,** VII 1927 (see note there)
roche, *sb.* (OF *roche*), rock
rode, *sb.* (OE *rudu*, f.), complexion
rof, *pret. of* **rive** (ON *rīfa*), tore
roghte, *pret. of* **recche**[2]. See § 53
Romayn gestes, stories of Rome
ronne, *pret. and pp. of* **renne.** See § 63
Ronyan, Ronyon. See note on VI 310
roode-beem, *sb.* (OE *rōd*, f., + *bēam*, m.), cross
roote, *sb.* (ON *rōt*), root, radix; in astrology, the figure of the heavens at the moment of a person's birth
rote[1], *sb.* (OF *rote*), rote, a mediaeval stringed instrument, played with a bow or with the fingers
rote[2], *sb.* (etym. obscure); **by rote,** by heart
rotie, *v.* (OE *rotian*, W II), cause rot
rouke, *v.* (cf. Norw dial. *ruka*, crouch), crouch, cower
roule, *v.* (OF *rouler*), LL *rotulare*, fr. *rotula*, dim. of *rota*, wheel), gad about
Rouncivale, Hospital of Our Lady of Roncevaux in London
rouncy, *sb.* (OF *roncin*), carthorse
rounde, *adv.* (OF *rund*, *rond*), roundly, freely, fully
roundel, *sb.* (OF *rondel*), rondeau, a poem involving repetition according to a fixed pattern
route, *sb.* (OF *route*), company, troop
route, *v.* (OF *router*), assemble
routhe. See **reuthe**
rove, *sb.* (OE *hrōf*, m.), roof
rowm, *adj.* (OE *rūm*), spacious
rowne, *v.* (OE *rūnian*, W II), whisper
rowtynge, *sb.* (cf. ON v. *rauta*), roaring
rubible. See **ribible**
rubriche, *sb.* (F *rubrique* or L *rubrica*), rubric, directions or instructions (originally written in red)
Ruce, Russia
ruddok, *sb.* (OE *rudduc*, m.), robin
Rufus, a Greek physician of the first century, author of *De Melancholia*
rumbul, *sb.* (onomatopoetic; cf. v. *romblen*, *rumblen*), disturbance
rum ram ruf, meaningless syllables all beginning with "r," to illustrate alliteration
rymeye, *v.* (AF *rimeier*), rhyme
rys, *sb.* (OE *hrīs*), twig, small branch
ryve, *v.* (ON *rīfa*), pierce

S

sad, *adj.* (OE *sæd*), trustworthy, steadfast, sober
sadly, *adv.* (OE *sæd* + *-ly*), heavily
saffron, *v.* (OF *saffraner*), give color to
sal, shall (Nth)
Saluces, Saluzzo, a district in Italy, south of Turin
salue, *v.* (OF *saluer*), salute, greet; **saleweth,** *3 sg. pres.;* **salewed,** *pp.*
salwe, *sb.* (OE *sealh*, m.), willow
sangwyn, *adj.* (OF *sanguin*), sanguine, ruddy; *sb.*, clot' of a blood-red color
sapience, *sb.* (OF *sapience*), wisdom
sarge, *sb.* (OF *sarge*), serge
Sarray, Sarai, the capital city of the Tartars of the Ponent. See note on V 9
Satalye, Adalia, a city in Asiatic Turkey, conquered by Pierre de Lusignan in 1361
Saturn, the god and the planet

sauf, *adj.* (F *sauf*), safe; **saufly,** *adv.*
saugh, *pret. of* **se.** See § 66
sautrie, *sb.* (OF *psalterie*), psaltery, a mediaeval stringed instrument, played like the harp
savacioun, *sb.* (OF *sauvacion*), salvation
save [1], *sb.* (OF *sauve*, L *salvia*), sage
save [2], *sb.* (OE *sealf*, f.), salve
savour, *sb.* (OF *savour*), taste, pleasure
savour, *v.* (OF *savourer*), have a mind to
sawcefleem, *adj.* (OF *sausefleme*), pimpled — one of the effects of a leprous condition
sawe, *sb.* (OE *sagu*, f. indecl.), saying, III 660; speech, VIII 691
say, *pret. of* **se.** See § 66
sayn, *pp. of* **se.** See § 66
scaled, *adj.* (*scall* + *-ed;* cf. ON *skalle*), scabby
Scariot, Judas Iscariot
scarlet, *sb.* (aphetic fr. OF *escarlate*), name of a cloth, originally of different colors
scarsly, *adv.* (cf. OF *escars*), economically
scathe, *sb.* (OM *scaþa*, WS *sceaþa*, m.), pity, harm, injury
science, *sb.* (F *science*), knowledge, particular branch of learning
sclaundre, *sb.* (OF *esclandre*, *-aundre*), ill repute, disgrace
sclendre, *adj.* (OF *esclendre*), slender, meager, poor
scoleye, *v.* (OF *escoler*, AF **escoleier*), attend school, study
Scot, a common name for a horse
scrippe, *sb.* (ON *skreppa*), wallet, bag for alms
scripture, *sb.* (L *scriptura*), scripture, writing
scriveyn, *sb.* (OF *escrivain*, *-ein*), scrivener, a professional copyist
se, seen, sene, *v.* (OE *sēon*, S V), see
seche, *v.* (OE *sēcan*, W I), seek, search
see, *sb.* (OF *see*, *siẽ*), seat, throne
see, *sb.* (OE *sæ*, f., m.), sea; **the Grete See,** the Mediterranean Sea
seeke, *adj.* See **sik**
seen, *v.* See **se**
seeth, *pret. of* **sethe.** See § 57
seigh, *pret. of* **se.** See § 66
seintuarie, *sb.* (OF *saintuaire*, *-arie*), portable shrine for sacred relics
seistow, sayest thou
selde, *adv.* (OE *seldan*, *-on*, *-un*), seldom; *adj.*, few; **seelde tyme,** few times
selven, *adj.* (OE *seolf*, *self*), self, same, very
sely, *adj.* (OM *sēlig*, WS *sǣlig*), good, VII 1702, IV 948; poor, VII 4565, IV 2423; innocent, VI 292; foolish, I 4090
semblant, *sb.* (OF *semblant*), semblance, appearance
semblen, *v.* (OF *sembler*), assemble
semely, *adj.* (Icel *sǣmiligr*), comely, handsome; **semeely, semely, semyly,** *adv.*
semycope, *sb.* (L *semi-* + LL *capa*), short outer cape or cloak
Semyrame, Semiramis
sendal, *sb.* (OF *sendal*), sendel, a kind of thin silk
sene, *v.* See **se**
sene, ysene, *adj.* (OE *gesēne*, *gesȳne*), visible, evident, manifest
Senec, Senek, Seneca, a Roman philosopher in great repute for his ethical writings
senge, *v.* (OE *sengan*, W I), singe
sentence, *sb.* (OF *sentence*), sentence, sentiment, meaning, content, matter, judgment, opinion
Septe, Ceuta, a city in Morocco
Serapion, an Arabian physician of the 11th century, who wrote on medicine and medicinal herbs
sergeant, *sb.* (OF *sergeant*), sergeant (a household officer); **sergeant of the lawe,** sergeant-at-law. See note on I 309ff.
servage, *sb.* (OF *servage*), service, servitude, bondage
serye, *sb.* (cf. F *serie*, L *series*), series, discussion
seten, *pret. of* **sitten.** See § 67
sethe, *v.* (OE *sēoðan*, S II), boil; **seeth,** *pret. sg.*, IV 227
sette, *v.* (OE *settan*, W I), set, place; **yset a-werke,** deceived, I 4337

seuretee, *sb.* (OF *seurte*), surety, security
sewe, *sb.* (OE *sēaw;* cf. OF *sew*), soup
sewe, *v.* (OF *sewir*), pursue, follow
sexteyn, *sb.* (AF *secrestein*, OF *sacristain*), sacristan
seyde, *pret. of* **seye.**
seyn, *pp. of* **se.** See § 66
seynd, *pp. of* **senge; seynd bacon,** broiled bacon
shaft, *sb.* (OE *sceaft*, m.), shaft, the stock of an arrow or a spear; also applied to the entire weapon
shal, *v.* (OE *sculan*, See § 91), shall, must, ought
shaltow, shalt thou
shamefast, *adj.* (OE *sceamfæst*), modest
shamefastnesse, *sb.* (OE *sceamfæst* + *-nesse*), modesty, shyness
shapen, *v.* (ME v. prob. fr. sb. *shape;* cf. OE *scieppan*, S VI), shape, plan, purpose, arrange, create, determine
shawe, *sb.* (OE *sceaga*, m., corresp. to NFris *skage*, farthest edge of cultivated land), thicket, copse
sheeld, *sb.* (OM *sceld*, WS *scield*, m.), French crown, worth 3s. 4d.
sheene, *adj.* (OM *scēne*, WS *scīene*), bright, beautiful, fair
sheete, *v.* (OE *scēotan*, S II), shoot
shende, *v.* (OE *scendan*, W I), injure, destroy, disgrace, reprove
shepne, shipne, *sb.* (OE *scypen*, f.), shed, stable
shette, *v.* (OE *scyttan*, W I), shut
shilde, *v.* (OE *scyldan, scildan*, W I), forbid
shill, *adj.* (OE *scyl*), shrill
shipne. See **shepne**
shirreve, *sb.* (OE *scīr*, f. + *gerēfa*, m.), sheriff
shode, *sb.* (OE *scāde*, f.?), the parting of the hair
sholdestou, shouldst thou
shonde, *sb.* (OE *scond*, f.), shame, dishonor
shoope, shoopen, *pret. of* **shapen.** See § 69
short-sholdred (OE *sc[e]ort* + OE *sculdor*, m.), with short upper arms
shot, *sb.* (OE *gesceot*, n.), arrow, dart, any missile
shrewe, *sb.* (OE *scrēawa*, m.), ill-tempered or evil person, man or woman; rogue
shrewe, *v.* (cf. OE sb. *scrēawa*, m.), curse
shrift, *sb.* (OE *scrift*, m.), confession
shrifte-fadres, *sb. pl.* (**shrift** + *fæder*, m.), confessors
shrighte, *pret. of* **shriken.**
shriken, *v.* (cf. Icel *skrikja*), shriek
shryve, *v.* (OE *scrīfan*, S I), shrive, administer confession; **y-shryven,** *pp.*
shul, *pl. pres. of* **shal.** See § 91
shyvere, *sb.* (cf. MHG *schivere*, splinter), morsel
sigh, *pret. of* **se.** See § 66
significavit, the Latin word beginning the writ authorizing the arrest of an excommunicated person
sik, *adj.* (OE *sēoc, sīoc*), sick, ill; **seeke,** *pl.*
siker, *adj.* (OE *sicor*, L *securus*), sure, certain; **sikerer,** *comp.;* **sikerly,** *adv.*
sikernesse, *sb.* (cf. OE *sicor*), security, safety, confidence
sikly, *adv.* (OE *sik* + *-ly*), ill, badly; **sikly berth,** endureth ill
Simplicius Gallus, erroneously for C. Sulpitius Gallus, in a story taken from Valerius Maximus, *Dicta et Facta*, vi, 3
sisoures, *sb. pl.* (OF *cisoires*), scissors
sit, *3 sg. pres. of* **sitte,** I 1800, II 970
sith, *sb.* (OE *sīð*, m.), time; **sithe, sithes,** *pl.*
sith, sithen, syn, *adv., conj., prep.* (OE *sīð, siððan*), afterwards, since, then; **syn, syn that,** *conj.;* **syn,** *prep.;* **goon sithen,** long since, V 536
sitten, *v.* (OE *sittan*, S V), sit, suit, be fitting; **yvele it sit,** it is unfitting
skile, *sb.* (ON *skil*), reason, argument
skilful, *adj.* (ON *skil* + *-ful*), reasonable, II 1038
skrike, *v.* (cf. Icel. *skrikja*), shriek
slake, *v.* (OE *slacian*, W II), slake, slacken, cease, cause to cease
slawen, *pp. of* **sleen.** See § 73

sleen, *v.* (OE *slēan*, S VI), kill
sleere, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *slēan*), slayer
sleigh, sly, *adj.* (cf. Icel *slœgr*), sly, crafty, skilful, skilfully produced
sleighte, *sb.* (ON *slœgð*), cunning, trickery, skill, trick; **with greet sleighte,** with great dexterity
slider, *adj.* (OE *slider*), slippery
slit, *3 sg. pres. of* **slyde.** See § 80
slo, *sb.* (OE *slā*, f.), sloe, the fruit of the blackthorn
slogardrie, *sb.* (cf. Da v. *slug*), laziness
slow, *sb.* (OE *slōh*, m., n.), slough
slowe, *pret. of* **sleen.** See § 73
sly, *adj.* See **sleigh**
slyly, *adv.* (cf. Icel *slœgr*), slyly, sagaciously, skilfully
slyde, *v.* (OE *slīdan*, S I), slip
slyk, *adj.* (OE **slice;* cf. v. *slician*), sleek
slyk, *adj.* (ON *slīkr*, for earlier **swalikr*, so-like), such (Nth)
smal, *adj.* (OE *smæll*), small, slender
smerte, *adj.* (OE **smeorte*), smart, keen, painful; also *adv.*
smerte, *v.* (OE *smeortan*, S III), smart, give pain to, feel pain or grief; *impers.*, I 230, V 564
smok, *sb.* (OE *smoc*, m.), chemise
smoklees, *adj.* (*smok* [OE *smoc*, m.] + *-lees*), smockless
smoterlich, *adj.* (cf. *bismotered*, *smut*, and in Gmc dialects *schmotz*, *schmutz*, dirt), slatternly
smyt, *3 sg. pres. of* **smyte.** See § 80
smyte, *v.* (OE *smītan*, S I), smite, strike
smoot, *pret. of* **smyte.** See § 56
sneewe, *v.* (OE *snīwan*, W I), snow
snybben, *v.* (cf. Dan *snibbe*), snub, reprove
so, *adv.* (OE *swā*), so, thus; *used to introduce a wish with verb in subj. mood:* **so God yow blesse,** VII 3978; **so moot I thee,** VII 4166; **so moote I brouke,** VII 4490
so, *conj.* (OE *swā*) so; **so as,** just as
sokene, *sb.* (OE *sōcn*, f., Goth *sōkns*, search, enquiry), right to grind corn for the people of a certain neighborhood
solas, *sb.* (OF *solas*), solace, comfort, pleasure, diversion, rest
solempne, *adj.* (OF *solempne*), solemn, splendid, grand, festive, important; **solempnely,** *adv.*, impressively
solempnytee, *sb.* (OF *solempnité*), solemnity, splendor, pomp
Soler Halle, King's Hostel (now incorporated in Trinity College, Cambridge)
soleyne, *adj.* (app. fr. *AF *solein*), solitary
som, *pro. indef.* (OE *sum*), some, one; **somme,** *pl.;* **som . . . som,** one . . . another; **alle and some,** one and all, IV 941; **al and som,** the sum of the matter, V 1606
somdel, *adv.* (OE *sum dǣl*), somewhat
somnour, somonour, *sb.* (OF *semoneor*), summoner. See note on I 543
somonce, *sb.* (AF and OF *semonce*), summons
somonour. See **somnour**
sompne, *v.* (AF and OF *semon-*, *semun-*, pres. stem of *semondre*), summon
sond, *sb.* (OE *sand*, m.), sand
sonde, *sb.* (OE *sand*, f. cf. v., *sendan*), message, messenger, thing sent, dispensation, providence
sonne, *sb.* (OE *sunne*, f.), sun
soon, *sb.* See **soun**
soote, sweete, swete, swoote, *adj., adv.* (OE *swēte*), sweet; **swoote,** *adv.*, VI 543
sooth, *adj.* (cf. OE sb. *sōþ*, n.), true; **soothly,** *adv.*
soothfastnesse, *sb.* (OE *sōþfæstness*, f.), truth, sincerity
sophyme, *sb.* (OF *sophisme*), sophism, subtlety, subtle argument, deceitful device
sore, *v.* (F *essorer*), soar
sort, *sb.* (F *sort*), chance
sorwe, *sb.* (OE *sorh*, *sorg*, f.), sorrow, compassion, grief
sothe, *sb.* (OE *sōð*, n.), truth; **for sothe,** in truth, truly
soun, soon, *sb.* (AF *soun*), sound
souple, *adj.* (F *souple*), supple, pliant

sours, *sb.* (OF *sourse*), source, swoop
soutere, *sb.* (OE *sūtere,* m., L *sutor* fr. v. *suere,* sew), shoemaker, cobbler
Southwerk, Southwark, the suburb of London at the south end of London Bridge
soutil, *adj.* (OF *soutil,* L *subtilem,* finely woven), ingenious, skilful, subtle
sovereyn, *adj.* (OF *soverain*), high, chief
sowdan, *sb.* (OF *soudan*), sultan
sowded, *pp., adj.* (cf. OF *souder*), confirmed in
sowke, *v.* (OE *sūcan,* S II), suck; extract money
sowne, *v.* (OF *soner, suner*), sound, talk about, imitate, tend; **sowneth unto,** *pres.,* accords with, VII 3157; V 517; **sownynge,** *pres. p.,* relating to, I 275; **sownynge in,** inclining to, I 307
sowre, *adv.* (OE adj. *sūr*), bitterly
space, *sb.* (OF *espace*), space, space of time, time, opportunity; **tyme and space,** time and opportunity, I 35; **space of audience,** short time for audience, IV 103; cf. **space and audience,** X 64; **the space,** meanwhile, I 176
sparhauk, sperhauke, *sb.* (OE *spearhafoc,* m.), sparrow hawk
sparre, *sb.* (not recorded in OE), rafter
sparth, *sb.* (etym. obscure; cf. ON *sparþa*), battle axe
speces, *sb.* (cf. OF *espece*), kind
spede, *v.* (OE *spēdan,* W I), speed, hasten, prosper
spedful, *adj.* (OE *spēd,* f. + *-ful*), profitable
spekestow, speakest thou
spell, *sb.* (OE *spell,* n.), tale, story
spere, *sb.* (OF *espere*), sphere; for astronomical use, see p. 133
sperhauke. See **sparhauk**
spiced, *pp., adj.* (OF *espicer*) sophisticated
spicerye, *sb.* (OF *espicerie*), oriental goods. See note on VII 2043
spille, *v.* (OE *spillan,* W I), destroy, kill; *intr.,* perish
spitously, *adv.* (aphetic fr. AF *despitous*), contemptuously
sporne, *v.* (OE *spurnan,* S III), stumble
spousaille, *sb.* (OF *espousailles*), wedding
sprede, *v.* (OE *sprǣdan,* W I), spread, extend
spreynd, *pp. of* **springen**
springen, *v.* (OE *sprengan,* W I), sow, II 1183; **spreynd,** *pp.,* sprinkled, II 422, 1830
squames, *sb.* (L *squama*), scales of rust
squier, *sb.* (OF *esquier*), esquire, young aspirant to knighthood who attended upon a knight or in a noble or royal household
staf-slynge, *sb.* (OE *stæf,* m. + *slynge*), a sling attached to a stick
stal, *pret. of* **stelen** (OE *stelan,* S IV), stole
stalke, *sb.* (cf. OE *stela,* NFris *stelk*), stalk, piece of straw
stant, *3 sg. pres. of* **stonde.** See § 80
stape, *pp., adj.* (OE *stæppan, steppan,* S VI), advanced
starf, *pret. sg. of* **sterve.** See § 60
stark, *adj.* (OE *stearc*), strong
startlynge, *pres. p.* (cf. ON *sterta*), skittish
Stace, Statius, Latin poet, author of the *Thebais*
stare, *sb.* (OE *stær,* m.), starling
steere, *sb.* (OE *stere*), rudder
steerelees, *adj.* (OE *stēoralēas*), without a steersman
stelen, *v.* (OE *stelan,* S IV), steal
steme, *v.* (OE *stēman,* W I), glow
stenten, *v.* See **stynten**
stepe, *adj.* (OE *stēap*), prominent
stere, *sb.* (OE *stēora,* m.), pilot
sterlynges, *sb. pl.* (early ME *sterling;* perh. **steorling*), silver pennies
stert, *sb.* (cf. v. **stirte**), bound
sterte, *v.* See **stirte**
sterve, *v.* (OE *steorfan,* S III), die
stevene, *sb.* (OE *stefn,* f.), voice, language, appointed time, appointment
stibourn, *adj.* (etym. obscure), stubborn
stiken, *v.* (OE *stician,* W II), stab

stile, *sb.* (OE *stigel*, f.), stile, steps for getting over a fence or wall
stillatorie, *sb.* (LL *stillatorium*), still
stirte, sterte, *v.* (OE *styrtan*, W I), start, leap, go quickly, rush; **sterte,** Kentish or Nth
stok, *sb.* (OE *stoc*, m.), stock
stoke, *v.* (perh. OF *estoquier*), stab, thrust
stomak, *sb.* (OF *estomac*), stomach; feeling, III 1441
stonden, *v.* (OE *stondan*, S VI; cf. § 70), stand; *pret.*, **stod**; *pp.*, **stonden**
stoon, *sb.* (OE *stān*, m.), stone, rock, precious stone, gem; **cristal stones,** receptacle made of crystal, VI 347
stoor, *sb.* (OF *estor*), store, stock of a farm, value
storial, *adj.* (aphetic form of *historial*), historical
storie, *sb.* (AF *estorie*, L *historia*), saint's legend
storven, *pret. pl. of* **sterve.** See § 60
stot, *sb.* (cf. Icel *stūtr*), horse, stallion; old woman (slang), III 1630
stounde, *sb.* (OE *stund*, f.), time
strangle (OF *estrangler*), choke, kill in any manner
Stratford atte Bowe, Stratford-at-Bow, a few miles east of the Tower of London
straunge, *adj.* (OF *estrange*), strange, foreign, difficult; **made it straunge,** made it seem a difficult matter, V 1223
stree, *sb.* (OE *strēaw*, n.), straw
streen, *sb.* (OE *strēon*, n.), strain, stock
streight, *pret. of* **strecche.** See § 53
streit, *adj.* (OF *estreit*, L *strictus*), strict, narrow, limited; **streyte,** drawn, VII 4547; **streite,** *adv.*, tightly, I 457
strem, *sb.* (OE *strēam*, m.), stream, river, current, beam, ray of light; **stremes,** *pl.*
strepe, *v.* (OE *strȳpan*, W I), strip, rob
streyne, *v.* (cf. OF *streindre*), strain, constrain, force
strike, *sb.* (cf. LG *strike*, *streke*), bunch, hank; **a strike of flex,** a hank of flax, I 676
strond, *sb.* (OE *strond*, n.), strand, shore; **strondes,** *pl.*
Strother, a place in Northumberland. See note on I 4014
stroute, *v.* (OE *strūtian*, W II), spread out
stubbel-goos, *sb.* (OF *stuble* + OE *gōs*, f.), Michaelmas goose. See note on I 4351
sturdinesse, *sb.* (cf. adj. **sturdy**), cruelty
sturdy, *adj.* (OF *estourdi*), cruel
stuwe, *sb.* (MLG *stouwe*, *stow*), fish-pond
styken, *v.* (OE *stician*, W II), stick, stab
stynten (OE *styntan*, W I), cease, stop
styth, *sb.* (ON *steþi*), anvil
styves, *sb. pl.* (cf. OF *en estui*, in a tub), tanks for keeping fish alive until they were cooked
styward, *sb.* (OE *stīweard*, m.), steward, chief agent of a manorial lord
stywe, *sb.* (OF *estuve*, heated room), brothel
subget, *sb.* (OF *subget*), subject
sublymatory, *sb.* (LL *sublimatorium*), still for distillation
substaunce, *sb.* (OF *substancé*), goods, wealth, essential part, essence
subtiltee, *sb.* (F *subtilité*), subtlety, skill, cunning, trick
suffisance, *sb.* (OF *soufisance*, F *suffisance*), sufficiency, competency, satisfaction, content; **hertes suffisaunce,** heart's content
suffisant, *adj.* (OF *soufisant*), sufficient, capable, competent
suffrable, *adj.* (OF *suffrable*), patient
suffraunt, *pres. p., adj.* (cf. AF v. *suffrir*), patient
surcote, *sb.* (OF *surcote*), surcoat, outer coat
surplys, *sb.* (AF *surpliz*), loose robe
Surrye, Syria
sursanure, *sb.* (OF *sursaneüre*), wound healed, or healing, outwardly only

suspect, *sb.* (OF *suspect*), suspicion, IV 905
suster, *sb.* (OE *sweoster*, *swuster*, f.; cf. OFris *suster*), sister; **sustres, sustren,** *pl.*
suyte, *sb.* (OF *suite*), suit, kind
swa, *adv.* (OE *swā*), so (Nth)
swal, *pret. of* **swelle.** See § 59
swappe, *v.* (etym. obscure; cf. sb., *swappe*), strike, dash, fall with force; **swapte,** *pret.*
swatte, *pret. of* **swete,** q.v.
sweigh, *sb.* (ON *sveigr*, Norw *sveig*), motion, impulsion, sway
swelle, *v.* (OE *swellan*, S III), swell
swelte, *v.* (OE *sweltan*, S III), die, faint
swelwe, *v.* (OE *swelgan*, S III), swallow
swere, *v.* (OE *swerian*, S VI; cf. § 71), swear, forswear
swete, *adj.* See **soote**
swete, *v.* (OE *swǣtan*, W I) sweat; **swatte,** *pret.*
sweven, *sb.* (OE *swefen*, n.), sleep, dream; **swevenes, swevenys,** *pl.*
swich, *adj.* (OE *swilc*, *swylc*), such; **swich oon,** such a one
swithe, *adv.* (OE *swīðe*), quickly; **as swithe,** very quickly
swogh, swough, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *swōgan*, S VII), swoon
swoot, *sb.* (OE *swāt*, n.), sweat
swoote, *adj.* See **soote**
swynk, *sb.* (OE *geswinc*, n.), labor, toil
swynken, *v.* (OE *swincan*, S III), labor, toil
swynkere, *sb.* (cf. v. **swynken**), laborer
syen, *pret. pl. of* **se.** See § 66
sygamour, *sb.* (OF *sic[h]amor*), sycamore
syklatoun, *sb.* (OF *siglaton*), costly mediaeval cloth of uncertain material
symphonye, *sb.* (OF *symphonie*), sort of drum
syn, *prep., conj.* See **sith**
synge, *v.* (OE *singan*, S III), sing
Synon, Sinon, the traitor in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*
sys synk, *sb.* (OF *sis* + OF *cinq*), six five, one of the best throws in hazard
syttynge, *adj.* (*sit* + *-ing;* after OF *[bien] seant*), suitable

T

taas, *sb.* (OF *tas*), heap, pile
tabard, *sb.* (OF *tabart*), tabard, a loose upper garment; **Tabard,** the name and sign of an inn, I 20
table, *sb.* (OF *table*), table; the table of the commandments, VI 639; **tables,** *pl.*, the game of backgammon, V 900; tablets, III 1741
tacord, to accord
taffraye, to affray
taille, *sb.* (OF *taille*, cut, division), tally, score; **by taille,** by tally, on credit
takel, *sb.* (cf. MLG *takel*), equipment
taken, *v.* (ON *taka*), take, seize, deliver, obtain, receive, derive, understand; **I me take,** I betake myself, VII 1985; **take keepe,** *3 sg. pres. subj.*, take notice; **al be it take,** *3 sg. pres. subj.;* **taak,** *imp.;* **as taak,** *imp.*, pray take; **took,** gave, IX 91
talen, *v.* (OE *talian*, W I), tell tales
talent, *sb.* (OF *talent*), appetite, desire, inclination
talighte, to alight
tamenden, to amend
tanoyen (*to* + *anoyen*). See **anoyen**
tape, *sb.* (cf. OE *tæppe*, f.), tape, string
tappe, *sb.* (OE *tæppa*, m.), tap, faucet
tappestere, *sb.* (OE *tæppestre*, f. of *tæppere*), barmaid
tapyser, *sb.* (OF *tapicier*), tapestry weaver
tare, *sb.* (etym. obscure), tare, bit, jot, thing of no value
tareste (*to* + *areste*). See **areste,** *v.*
targe, *sb.* (OE *targe*, f., OF *targe*), light shield
tarie, *v.* (etym. obscure), prolong, delay
tarraye, to array
Tars, Tarsus, a city in Asia Minor
tartre, oil of, cream of tartar
tassaille, to assail

tassaye (*to* + *assaye*). See **assaye**, *v.*
tassoile, to assoil
Taur, a zodiacal sign. See p. 135
tellen *v.* (OE *tellan*, W I), tell, say, recount; **telle . . . tale**, give account, I 330; **ne telle no stoor**, set no store by, make no account of, VII 4344; **telle forth**, *inf.*, go on telling, continue, VI 660; **forth to tellen**, to continue, IV 39; **litel tale hath toold**, little account hath taken, VII 4308
tembrace, tenbrace, to embrace
tempest, *v.* (OF *tempester*), agitate, disturb
Temple, *sb.* (OE *templ*, *tempel*, n., fr. L, *templum*), the Temple. See note on I 567
temporal, *adj.* (L *temporalis*), worldly
tempre, *adj.*, aphetic for **attempree**, q.v.
tempte, *v.* (OF *tempter*), try, test
tendure, to endure
tendyte, to endite
tene, *sb.* (OE *tēona*, m.), vexation, trouble, grief
tentifly, *adv.* (OF *tentif* + *-ly*), attentively, carefully
tercelet, *sb.* (OF *tercel*, dim. *tercelet*), male falcon or hawk; **tercelettes**, *pl.*
terciane, *adj.* (OF *tertian*), intermittent, occurring every third day
Termagaunt, the name of a deity supposed to be worshipped by Mohammedans
terme, *sb.* (OF *terme*), term, period, appointed time; **termes**, *pl.*, fixed phrases, I 639; technical terms, I 323, IV 16, V 1266; **in term**, with formal accuracy, VI 311
terve, *v.* (etym. obscure), strip, flay
Tesbe, Thisbe, the sweetheart of Pyramus
tescape, to escape
tespye, to espy
testament, *sb.* (L *testamentum*), will
testere, *sb.* (OF *testiere*), ~~helmet~~
testif, *adj.* (AF *testif*), headstrong
textueel, *adj.* (app. AF **textuel*, fr. L *textualis*, fr. *textus*), well-read
teyne (cf. ON *teinn*, twig, rod), a slender rod of metal
thalighte, *the* (i.e. *thee*) + *alighte*
thank, *sb.* (OE *þanc*, m.), thanks, gratitude; **his, hir thankes**, willingly
thanke, thonken, *v.* (OE *þancian*, *þoncian*, W II), thank
thapocalips, the Apocalypse
tharray (**the** + **array**). See **array**, *sb.*
that, *pro. def.* (OE *þæt*), that, the; **that oon**, the one; **that oother**, the other
thavys (**the** + **avys**), the opinion
theech (**thee**, v. + **ich**, pro.), may I thrive
theek (**thee**, v. + **ik**, pro.), may I thrive
theen, *v.* (OE *þēon*, S I), thrive
theffect, the effect
Thelophus, Telephus, King of Mysia, wounded by the spear of Achilles and healed by the rust from it
thencens, the incense
thenche, thenke, *v.* (OE *þencan*, W I), think, imagine
thencrees, the increase
thende, the end
thengyne, the engine, i.e., war machine
thenke. See **thenche**
Theofraste, Theophrastus, a Greek philosopher, an extract from whose *Golden Book on Marriage* is quoted by St. Jerome
ther, *conj.*, *adv.* (OE *þǣr*), there where, where, whereas; **ther-as**, where, whereas
therto, *adv.* (OE *þǣrtō*), also, moreover, besides
thewes, *sb. pl.* (OE *þēaw*, m.), habits, virtues
thexcuse, thee excuse, III 1611
thexecucioun, the execution
thilke, *pro. adj.* (OE *þylc*), such, that, the same, that very
thirle, *v.* (OE *þirlian*, W II), pierce
tho, *adv.* (OE *þā*), then, at that time
tho, *pro.*, *adj.*, *pl.* (OE *þā*, pl.), those, them
tholde, the old
thole, *v.* (OE *þolian*, W II), suffer
thonken. See **thanke**

thorisonte, the horizon
thrawe, draw
thresshfold, *sb.* (OE *þerscold*, *þerscwold*, *þerxold*, m.), threshold
threste, *v.* (ON *þrýsta*), thrust, push
thretyng, *sb.* (cf. OE v. *þrēātian*, W II), threatening
thries, *adv.* (**thrie**, fr. OE *þriwa*, + **-s**), thrice
thrifty, *adj.* (cf. ON *þrift*), profitable, B 46, 1165; decent, III 238
thriftily, *adv.* (cf. ON *þrift*), carefully, I 105; politely I 3131, V 1174
throp, *sb.* (OE *þorp*, m.), village; **thropes**, *gen. sg.*
throwe, *sb.* (OE *þrāg*, f.), time, short time
thrustelcok, *sb.* (OE *þrostel*, f. + *coc*, m.), throstlecock
thurgh-girt, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. v. **girden**), pierced through, I 1010
thwitel, *sb.* (cf. ME v. **thwite**), knife
thymage, the image
Thymothee, Timothy, disciple of St. Paul
thyng, *sb.* (OE *þing*, n.), thing, matter, affair, composition (as poem, song, or story; **thynges**, *pl.*; **alle thyng**, everything, V 608
thynke, *v.* (OE *þyncan*, W I), think, seem, appear; **methynketh**, *impers. pres.*, it seems to me; **hym wolde thynke**, it would seem to him, IV, 908
tidif, *sb.* (etym. unknown), tidy, a small bird; **tidyves**, *pl.* See note on V 650
tikelnesse, *sb.* (cf. OE *tinclian*, W II, tickle, etym. obscure), instability
til, *prep.* (cf. Icel *til*), to (Nth)
tiptoon, *sb.*, tiptoes. See **too**
tobeye, to obey
to-breste, *v.* (OE *tō-berstan*, S III), crush; **tobrosten**, *pp.*, I 2757
to-broken, *pp.* (OE *tō* + OE *brecan*, S IV), broken, destroyed
to-brosten, *pp. of* **to-breste**. See § 60
toforn, *prep.* (OE *tōforan*), before
to-hewen, *v.* (OE *tō-hēawan*, S VII), hew to pieces
tollen, *v.* (cf. ON *tolla*), take toll or pay
Tolletanes, *adj.* (L *Toletanus*, *Toletum*); **tables tolletanes**, astronomical tables. See note on V 1273
tombestere, *sb.* (OE *tumbestre*, f.), female tumbler or dancing girl
tonne, *sb.* (OE *tunne*, f.), tun, cask; **tonne greet**, as large as a cask, A 1994
too, *sb.* (OE *tā*, f., pl. *tān*), toe; **tone**, **toon**, **toos**, *pl.*
to-race, *v.* (prob. for *to-arace;* cf. *arace*), tear into pieces
to-rende, *v.* (OE *tōrendan*, W I), tear into pieces
tormentrie, *sb.* (OF *tourmenterie*), pain
tortuous, *adj.* (AF *tortuous*), astronomical term. The tortuous signs of the Zodiac are the six nearest the point of the vernal equinox; so called because they ascend more obliquely than the other six
to-shrede, *v.* (OE *to-scrēadian*, W II), cut into shreds
to-tere, *v.* (OE *tō-teran*, S IV), tear in pieces; **to-tore**, *pp.*
toun, **town**, *sb.* (OE *tūn*, m.), town, farmyard, neighborhood; **in towne**, *dat.*, ~~in the neighborhood~~, VII 1983; **to towne**, *dat.*, home, VII 2028
tour, *sb.* (F *tour*), tower; the Tower of London, I 3256 (see note)
tourette, *sb.* (OF *torete*, *tourete*), ring (perhaps eyelet-like), I 2152
toverbyde, to overbide, survive
to-yere, *adv.* (**to** + **yeere** [OE *gēar*, n.]), this year
Trace, Thrace
traitorie, *sb.* (cf. OF *traitor*), treachery
Tramyssene, Tlemçen, a Moorish kingdom in Morocco
translaten, *v.* (OF *translater*), transfer
trapped, *pp.*, *adj.* (OE **træppan*, in *betræppan*, W I), housed, harnessed
trappures, *sb. pl.* (OF **trapeüre*), trappings of horses
trays, *sb. pl.* (OF *trais*, pl. of *trait*), traces
tree, *sb.*, *adj.* (OF *trēo*, *trēow*, n.), tree, wood

tregetour, *sb.* (OF *tresgeteor*), magician, juggler
trench, *sb.* (OF *trenche*), trench, alley cut through shrubbery
trenchant, *adj.* (OF *trenchant*, pp. of *trenchier*, *trancher*), sharp
trentals, *sb. pl.* (Church L *trentale*), set of thirty requiem masses
tresse, *sb.* (F *tresse*), tress, braid
tretable, *adj.* (F *traitable*), affable
trete, *v.* (OF *traitier*), treat of, discourse upon, discuss
tretee, *sb.* (OF *traitié*, F *traité*), treaty, agreement, bargaining, discussion
tretys, *sb.* (AF *tretiz;* cf. OF v. *traitier*), treatise, VII 2147, 2153; treaty, VII 233; contract, IV 331
tretys, *adj.* (OF *traitis*, *iretis*), well formed
treye, *num.* (OF *trei*, *treis*), three
triacle, *sb.* (OF *triacle*), medicine
trille, *v.* (cf. Swed *trilla*, Dan *trille*), turn, twirl
trippe, *sb.* (OE **trip*), a small piece
triste, *v.* (var. of ME *trust*, fr. ON *treysta*), trust
trompe, *sb.* (OF *trompe*), trumpet
tronchon, *sb.* (OF *tronchon*), truncheon of a spear
trone, *sb.* (OF *trone*), throne
Trotula. See note on III 669ff.
trouble, *adj.* (OF *trouble*), troubled, anxious
trouthe, *sb.* (OE *trēowð*, f.), truth troth, promise
trowe, *v.* (OE *trēowian*, W II), think, believe
trye, *adj.* (F *trie*), excellent, choice
trype, *sb.* (OF *tripe*, *trippe*), tripe
tulle, *v.* (OE **tyllan*, **tollian*, **tullian*), allure (a term in falconry)
turne, *v.* (OE *turnian*), shape in a lathe; **turne coppes,** cf. note on I 3928
tweye, *num. adj.* (OE *twēgen*), two
tweyfold, *adj.* (Nth and Midl. fr. OE *twēgen* + *-feald*, twofold
twight, *pret. and pp.* (prob. OE **twiccan*, related to *twiccian*), pulled
twiste, *sb.* (OE *twist*), twig, branch
twiste, *v.* (cf. *twine*, fr. stem *twi-*), twist, wring, torture
twynne, *v.* (cf. OE *twin*), part, separate, depart
tyd, *sb.* (OE *tīd*, f.), tide, time, hour; **tydes,** *pl.*
tyden, *v.* (OE *tīdan*, W I), happen, betide
tydynges, *sb. pl.* (late OE *tidung*, f.), news
tyne, *sb.* (F *tine*), brewing vat
typet, *sb.* (etym. obscure, n.), tippet
Tysbe, Thisbe, the sweetheart of Pyramus
tytheres, *sb. pl.* (cf. OE *tēogoþa*, *teoþa*), those who pay tithes

U

unbokele, *v.* (cf. F *boucler*, L *buccula*), unbuckle; **unbokeled,** *pp., adj.*
undermele, *sb.* (OE *undern*, m. + *-mǣl*, n., m.?), morning-time, III 875
undern, undren, *sb.* (OE *undern*, m.), mid-morning
underpighte, *pret. of* **underpicchen** (etym. obscure; OE **picc[e]an*, W I?), propped up, stuffed out
undertake, *v.* (ME *under* + *take*), undertake, engage in an enterprise, affirm, warrant
undigne, *adj.* (*un* + *digne*, OF *digne*), unworthy
un-do, *v.* (OE *undōn*, see § 92), open, explain
undren. See **undern**
unethe, unnethes, *adv.* (OE *unēaðe*), scarcely, with difficulty
unhappe, *sb.* (*un-* + ON *happ*), mischance
unkouth, *adj.* (OE *uncūð*), strange, curious
unkynde, *adj.* (OE *uncynde*), unnatural; **unkyndely,** *adv.*
unnethes. See **unethe**
unsad, *adj.* (OE *unsæd*), unstable, unsettled
unset, *pp., adj.* (cf., OE *settan*, W I), unset, unappointed
unthank, *sb.* (cf. OE *þanc*, m.), curse
untressed, *adj.* (cf. F sb. *tresse* and v. *tresser*), unbraided, loose
unwar, *adj.* (cf. OE *wær*), unexpected

unweelde, *adj.* (cf. OE sb. *geweald*), unwieldy
unwemmed, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. OE *wemman*, W I), unspotted
unwist, *adj.* (cf. OE *witan;* see § 91), unknown
unwityng, *adv.* (OE adj. *unwitende*), without one's knowledge; **unwityngly,** *adv.*
unyolden, *pp.*, *adj.* (cf. OE *gieldan*, S III), not having surrendered
up, *prep.*, *adv.* (OE *up*), upon, on; **up peyne,** upon penalty, I 2543
upright, *adv.* (OE *upriht*), flat on the back, with upturned face; straight, I 3264
up-so-doun, *adv.* (OE *up swā dūne*), upside down
urinal, *sb.* (L *urinale*), pear-shaped glass vessel used in diagnoses
usage, *sb.* (OF *usage*), usage, use, habit, practice; **hadde in usage,** was accustomed, VII 1696
usaunce, *sb.* (F *usance*), custom
usaunt, *adj.* (cf. F v. *user*), accustomed
usure, *sb.* (OF *usure*), usury, interest

V

Valerie [1], Valerius, supposed author of "Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducenda uxore." See note on III 671
Valerius, Valerius Maximus, a Latin author of the first century, whose *Dicta et Facta* (or *Dictorum Factorumque Memorabilium* Libri IX) was a favorite source of anecdotal history
vasselage, *sb.* (OF *vassal[l]age*), prowess
vavasour, *sb.* (OF *vavassor*), vavasour. See note on I 360
venerie, *sb.* (OF *venerie*), hunting
Venerien, *adj.* (L *venerius*, fr. *Venus*), influenced by Venus
ventusynge, *sb.* (OF *ventouser*), cupping
venym, *sb.* (OF *venim*), poison
verdegris, *sb.* (OF *verdegris*), cf. note on VIII, 788ff.
verdit, *sb.* (OF *verdit*), decision
vermyne, *sb.* (F *vermine*), noxious animal
vernycle, *sb.* (fr. *Veronica*), vernicle. See note on I 685
verray, *adj.* (OF *verrai, verai*), true, excessive; **verray force,** main force, VII 3237
verrayment, *adv.* (cf. OF *verrai, verai*), verily, truly
vertu, *sb.* (OF *vertu*), virtue, power, magic influence
Vesulus, Monte Viso, in Italy
veyne blood, *sb.* (F *veine* + OE *blōd*, n.), vein bleeding
veze, *sb.* (cf. OE *fēsian*, W II), rush, blast
viage, *sb.* (OF *viage*), voyage, journey, expedition
vice, *sb.* (OF *vice*), error, defect
vigilies, *sb. pl.* (OF *vigile*), vigil, a religious service on the eve of a festival
vileyns, *adj.* (F *vilain*, L *villanus*, fr. *villa*), evil, wicked, rude
vielynye, *sb.* (OF *vileinie, vilanie*), unbecoming conduct or language, discourtesy, injury, disgrace
viole, *sb.* (OF *viole*, LL *vidula*), a mediaeval violin
virelay, *sb.* (OF *virelai*), virelay, a short poem arranged in successions of two sets of rimes
virytrate, *sb.* (etym. obscure), ~~wo-man~~ hag
vitaille, *sb.* (OF *vitaille*), victuals
vitailler, *sb.* (OF *vitailleur, vitailler*), victualler
Vitulon, Vitello or Vitellio, a Polish mathematician of the thirteenth century
voirdit (OF *verdit*), decision
vois, *sb.* (AF *voiz*, OF *voiz, vois*), voice, rumor, report
voluper, *sb.* (AF *volupier*, OF *voluper*), kerchief, headdress
vouche sauf, *v.* (OF *vochier*, + *sauf*), vouchsafe, grant; **as voucheth sauf,** *imp. pl.*, pray grant
voyden, *v.* (OF *voider*), void, vacate, expel, send away, dismiss
vyker, *sb.* (L *vicarius*), vicar

W

waat, *pres. sg. of* **witen,** Nth. See § 91

waget, *sb.* (OF *wachet*), light blue cloth

waiten, *v.* (OF *waitier*, var. of *guaitier*), watch, wait, look for

wake, *sb.* (OE *wacu*, f.), wake or watch; **wake-playes,** funeral games, I 2960

walwe, *v.* (OE *walwian*, W II), roll

wan, *pret. of* **wynnen.** See § 62

wan, *adj.* (OE *wan*), dark

wang, *sb.* (OE *wang*, m., cheek, jaw), molar tooth

wang-tooth, *sb.* (OE *wangtōþ*, m.), molar tooth

wanhope, *sb.* (OE *wan-* + *hopa*, m.), despair

wantowne, *adj.* (OE *wan-* + *towen*, fr. *togen*, pp. of *tēon*, S II), wild, wanton

wantownesse, *sb.* (OE *wan-* + *towen*, fr. *togen*, pp. of *tēon*, S II + *-nes*), wantonness; affectation, I 264

war, *adj.* (OE *wær*), aware, careful, cautious; canny, I 309

warde-cors, *sb.* (OF *wardecors*), bodyguard

wardeyn, *sb.* (OF *wardein*), warden

war derere (AF **ware dererę*), look out behind

ware, *v.* (OE *warian*, W II), beware, be on one's guard, take care; **war him,** *pres. subj. refl.*, let him beware, I 662; **ware you,** *imp.*, "look out," make way

warente, *v.* (OF *warantir*, var. of *garantir*), protect

warice, warisshe, *v.* (OF *warir*), cure

warne, werne, *v.* (OE *wearnian*, *warnian*, W II) warn, caution, give notice, apprise

waryangle, *sb.* (?OE *weargincel*), butcher bird, shrike

warye, *v.* (OE *wergian*, W II), curse

wast, *adj.* (OF *wast*), waste, desolate

wastel breed (OF *wastel* + OE *brēad*, n.), bread made of fine flour. See note on I 147

Watte, Wat, nickname for Walter

wawe, *sb.* (apparently cognate w. OE *wāg*, m.), wave

waxen, *v.* (OE *weaxan*, S VII), grow, increase

wayk, *adj.* (Icel *veikr*), weak

waymentynge, *sb.* (OF *waimenter*), lamentation, bewailing

webbe, *sb.* (OE *webba*, m., *webbe*, f.), a weaver

wedd, *sb.* (OE *wedd*, n.), pledge, surety; **to wedde,** *dat.*, in pledge, I 1218

wede, *sb.* (OE *wād*, f.), clothing, dress, armor; **under wede,** under (his) dress, under (his) armor

weex, *3 sg. pret. of* **waxen.** See § 74

weilaway, *interj.* (OE *wā lā wā*, later *wei la wei*), an exclamation of grief

welde, *v.* (OE *wealdan*, S VII), control

wele, *sb.* (OE *wela*, m.), weal, joy, prosperity, good fortune

weleful, *adj.* (OE *wela*, m. + *-ful*), prosperous, happy

welked, *pp. of* **welken**

welken, *sb.* (OE *wolcen*, n.), sky; **welkne,** *dat.*, IV 1124

welken, *v.* (Dan and other Gmc dial., *welken*), wither

wem, *sb.* (OE *wam*, influenced by v. *wemman*), hurt, harm

wende[1], *pret. of* **wene**

wenden[2], *pret. of* **wenden**

wenden, *v.* (OE *wendan*, W I), wend, go, pass

wene, *v.* (OE *wēnan*, W I), think, imagine, fancy; **as men wende,** *pret., subj. sg.*, as one might think, IV 440; **who wende,** *pret., subj.*, who would have thought, VI 782

wenestow, weenest thou, thinkest thou

were, *v.* (OE *werian*, W I), wear, defend; **werestow,** *2 sg. pres.*, wearest thou

werk, *sb.* (OE *weorc*, *werc*, n.), work, deed, trouble, "to do"; **yset a werk,** I 4337, fooled

werken, wirche, *v.* (OE *wyrcan*, W I), work, do, make, contrive, cause; **wirche** (Sth)

werkyng, wirkyng, *sb.* (OE *wyrcung*,

f.), working, conduct, actions, calculation

werne. See **warne**

werre, *sb.* (OF *guerre, werre*), war, strife

werreyen, *v.* (F *werreier*), make war against

werreyour, *sb.* (cf. F v. *werreier*), warrior

werte, *sb.* (OE *wearte*, f.), wart

wesshe, *v., pret.* (OE *wascan*, S VII), washed

wex, *pret. of* **waxen.** See § 74

weyve, *v.* (AF *weyver;* cf. Icel *veifa*), turn aside

wezele, *sb.* (OE *wesle*, f.), weasel

what, *pro., interj.* (OE *hwæt*, neut. pro.; also interj.), what, whatever, why; **what for . . . and,** both for . . . and

wheither, *pro., adj.* (OE *hwæðer*), which of the two, whichever

whelk, *sb.* (OE *hwylca*, m.), pimple; **whelkes,** *pl.*

whelp, *sb.* (OE *hwelp*, m.), puppy, cub; **whelpes,** *pl.*, dogs

wher, whether

which, *rel. pro.* (OE *hwilc*), which, who, what; **which that,** the one who, who, which; **the which that,** whom, IV 520; **which a,** what a; **for which,** wherefore

whilk, *rel. pro.* (OE *hwilc*), which (Nth)

whippel-tree, *sb.* (etym. obscure), cornel tree

wight, *sb.* (OE *wiht*, f.), creature, person

wighte, *sb.* (OE *wiht*, f.?), weight

wikke, wikked, *adj.* (cf. OE v. *wican*, S I), wicked, evil

wilfully, *adv.* (OE *wilfullīce*), voluntarily, of free will, purposely

Wilkyn, *dim. of* Will

wilnen, *v.* (OE *wilnian*, W II), desire, wish

wiltow, wilt thou

wirche. See **werken**

wirkyng. See **werkyng**

wise, *sb.* (OE *wīse*, f.), manner, way, custom

wisly, *adv.* (OE *gewislīce*), certainly, surely; **so wisly,** verily, V 1475

wisse, *v.* (OE *wissian*, W II), show, guide

wiste, *pret. of* **witen.** See § 91

wit, *sb.* (OE *witt*), mind, understanding, judgment, opinion, wisdom, knowledge; **wittes,** *pl.*

witen, *v.* (OE *witan*, see § 91), know; **wostow,** *2 sg. pres.*, knowest thou

witen, *v.* (OE *wītan*, W I), blame

with, *prep.* (OE *wið*), with, by

witholde, *v.* (cf. OE *healdan*, S VII), keep, maintain; **withholden,** *pp.*

withseye, *v.* (OE *wiþ-secgan*, W I), contradict

wityng, *sb.* (OE *witung*), knowledge

wlatsom, *adj.* (OE sb. *wlæta, wlætta*), loathsome, detestable

wo, *sb.* (OE *wā*), woe, sorrow, wailing; *adj.*, sad; **wo was his cook,** it was sad for his cook, I 351; **wo were us,** it would be sad for us, IV 139; **me was wo,** I was sad, V 579; **wo was Aurelie,** V 1007

woldestow, wouldst thou

wole, *v.* (OE *wille*, see § 92), will, wish; **nolde,** ne wolde, would not; **wole,** will go, V 617; **wolde,** would go, V 496; **wolde,** would have it, demanded, V 577, 591

wolle, *sb.* (OE *wull*, f.), wool

woltou, woltow, wilt thou

wombe, *sb.* (OE *wamb*, f.), womb, stomach

wonderly, *adv.* (OE *wundōrlīce*), wondrously, wonderfully

wone, *sb.* (OE *gewuna*, m.), wont, custom, habit

wone, *v.* (OE *wunian*, W II), live, dwell, be accustomed, be wont; **woned, wonned, wont,** *pp.*

wonger, *sb.* (OE *wangere*, m., fr. *wang*, m. cheek), pillow

wonyng, *sb.* (OE *wunung*, f.), house, dwelling

wood, *adj.* (OE *wōd*), insane, angry

woodly, *adv.* (OE *wōdlīce*), madly, fiercely

woodnesse, *sb.* (OE *wōdnes, wōdnis*, f.), madness

woon, *sb.* (Icel *vān*), retreat, place of shelter, VII 1991

woost, *pret. of* **witen.** See § 91

woot, *pres. of* **witen.** See § 91
wopen, *pp. of* **wepe.** See § 74
worildly, *adj.* (OE sb. *worold*, f. + *-ly*), secular, II 1026
worm, *sb.* (OE *wyrm*, m.), worm, snake
worshipe, *sb.* (OE *weorðscipe*, m.), worship, praise, honor
wort, *sb.* (OE *wyrt*, f.), herb, especially, a pot herb
worthen, *v.* (OE *weorþan*, S III), be, become; **he worth upon his steede,** mounts
worthy, *adj.* (OE *weorþig*), dignified, of good social position
wostou, wostow, wost thou, *pres. of* **witen.** See § 91
wowke. See **wyke**
woxen, *pp. of* **waxen.** See § 74
wratthen, *v.* (cf. OE *wrāþian*, W II), become angry
wraw, *adj.* (OE *wrāh*), angry, peevish
wrecche, *sb.* (OE *wræc*, n.), vengeance
wrecche, *adj.* (cf. OE *wrecca*, m. exile), unfortunate
wrecchednesse, *sb.* (cf. adj. **wrecche**), wretchedness, wickedness, a mean deed
wreke, *v.* (OE *wrecan*, S V), wreak, avenge, take vengeance; **wreker,** *sb.*, avenger
wreye, *v.* (OE *wrēgan*, W I), betray, reveal
wrighte, *sb.* (OE *wyrhta*, m.), mechanic
writhyng, *sb.* (cf. OE *wrīþan*, S I), turning
wroong, *v., pret. of* **wringen** (OE *wringan*, S III), wrung
wrooth, *adj.* (OE *wrāþ*), wroth, angry, at enmity
wrye, *v.* (OE *wrēon*, S I), cover, hide
wyde-where, *adv.* (*wīde* + *hwār*), far and wide
wyke, *sb.* (OE *weocu*, *wiocu*, f.), week
wyle, *sb.* (late OE *wīl*, etym. obscure; perh. *OF *wile*, var. of *guile*), trick
wympul, *sb.* (cf. MDu *wimpel*), wimple, a linen head covering
wyn-ape, *sb.* (OE *wīn*, n. + *apa*, m.); **dronken han wyn-ape,** have reached the silly stage of drunkenness. See note on H 44
wyndas, *sb.* (Icel *vindas*), windlass
wynke, *v.* (OE *wincian*, W II), shut the eyes. See note on VII 4620
wynsynge, *p., adj.* (perh. *OF *wencir*, var. of *guencir*, *guenchir*), restive
wys, *adj.* (OE *wis*), wise, prudent; **to make it wys,** to treat as requiring serious deliberation, I 785; **been gladly wyse,** like to seem wise, V 376
wys, wysse, *adv.* (OE *ȝewis*), certainly, truly; *often used as intensive particle with subj. of wish;* **as wys God helpe me,** so indeed may God help me, VII 4598; **God helpe me so as wys,** may God so help me indeed, V 1470. See **so** and **ywis**
wytest, *2 sg. pres. of* **witen.** See § 91

Y

y, *pers. pro.* (OE *ic*), I
y-, *a prefix, frequently indicating the pp.*
yaf, *pret. of* **yeven.** See § 66
yate, *sb.* (OM *gat*, WS *geat*, n.), gate
y-brouded, *pp., adj.* See **embrouded**
y-cleped, (*pp. of* **clepen**), entitled. See § 51
ydel, *adj.* (OE *idel*), idle, vain; **in ydel,** in vain; **ydelly,** *adv.*
y-doo, *pp. of* **do.** See § 92
ye. See **eye**
yeddynges, *sb. pl.* (OE *gidding*, *giedding*, f.), songs
yelde, *sb.* (OE *gild*, *gyld*, n.), gild
yeldehalle, *sb.* (OE *gild*, n. + *heall*, f.), gild hall
yelden, *v.* (OM *geldan*, WS *gieldan*, S III), yield, submit; reward, III 1772
yelpe, *v.* (OE *gielþan*, *gylþan*, S III), boast
yeman, *sb.* (etym. obscure), yeoman, servant
yerd, *sb.* (OE *geard*, m.), yard, garden
yerde, *sb.* (OE *geard*, f.), stick, rod
yerne, *adj.* (OE *georne*), gay, cheery; *adv.*, cheerily, quickly
yeven, yive, *v.* (OM *gefan*, WS *giefan*, S V), give

yfayth, in faith. See **fay**
y-fere, *adv.* See **in-fere**
y-fet, *pp. of* **fecchen**
y-fynde, *v.* (OE *ge-findan,* S III), find
y-glewed, *pp. of* **glewe** (F *gluer*), glued, V 182
y-glosed, *pp. of* **glosen**
y-go, *pp. of* **gan.** See § 92
y-grounded, *pp., adj.* (cf. OE, sb. *grund,* m.), grounded
y-here, *v.* (OE *gehīeran,* W I), hear
yive. See **yeven**
y-kempd, *pp. of* **kembe.** See § 51
y-lad, *pp. of* **lede**
y-laft, *pp. of* **leve**
yliche, *adv.* See **ylik,** *adj.*
ylik, *adj.* (OE *gelīc*), alike, like; **yliche, ylike,** *adv.*
Ylion, Ilium, the citadel of Troy. See note on II 289
y-lorn, *pp. of* **lese.** See § 57
ymage, *sb.* (F *image*), image; for astrological use, see note on I 418
ymaginatif, *adj.* (OF *imaginatif*), suspicious, V 1094
ymaginyng, *sb.* (cf. F v. *imaginer*), meditating, devising, scheming
y-meynd, *pp.* (OE *mengan,* W I), mixed, mingled
ympne, *sb.* (OF *ymne;* cf. LL *ympnus*), song of praise
Ynde, India
ynogh, ynowe, ynowh, *adj.* (OE *genōh, genōg*), enough; **ynowe,** *pl.* V 470; **ynogh, ynough, ynow,** *adv.*
yolle, *v.* (OE *giellan, gillan, gyllan,* S III; later W), shout
yomanrye, *sb.* (cf. **yeman**), yeomanry
yore, *adv.* (OM *gāra,* WS *gēara*), yore, formerly, of old, for a long time; **yore agon,** long ago; **of tyme yoore,** of olden time, of yore; **olde tymes yoore**
youlyng, *sb.* (cf. Icel *goula*), loud wailing
Ypermystra, Ypermystre, Hypermnestra
Ypocras, Hippocrates, a Greek physician, 460–377 B.C.
ypocras, *sb.* (OF *ypocras*), hippocras, wine flavored with spices
y-preved, *pp., adj.* (OF *prueve, 3 sg. pres.,* fr. *prover*), proved
y-purfiled, *pp., adj.* (OF *porfiler*), bordered, trimmed; cf. *profile*
y-reke, *pp., adj.* (cf. OE sb. *racu, ræcu,* rake, also MDu *reken*), raked together
y-ronne, *pp. of* **renne.** See § 63
yse, *sb.* (OE *īs,* n.), ice
y-sene, *pp. of* **se,** perhaps influenced by OE *gesȳne* (adj.), manifest, evident
y-shent, *pp. of* **shende**
y-shrive, *pp. of* **shryve.** See § 56
y-shryven, *pp. of* **shryve.** See § 56
y-slawe, *pp. of* **sleen.** See § 73
y-sprad, *pp., adj.* (OE *sprǣdan,* W I), spread
y-spreynd, *pp. of* **springen**
y-stalled, *pp., adj.* (OF *estaller*), enthroned
y-swonke, *pp. of* **swynken.** See § 62
y-tukked, *pp.* (OE *tūcian* or *tucian,* W II), girded up
yvele, *adv.* (OE *yfele,* adv.), ill, badly; **yvele it sit,** it is unbecoming, IV 460; **yvel biseye,** ill attired, IV 965; **yvele preeveth,** does not bear the test
y-voyded, *pp. of* **voyden**
ywis, *adv.* (OE *gewis*), certainly, truly. See **wys**
y-wrye, *pp. of* **wrye.** See § 56
y-wympled, *pp., adj.* (cf. **wympul,** sb.), wearing a wimple

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Zephirus, the west wind

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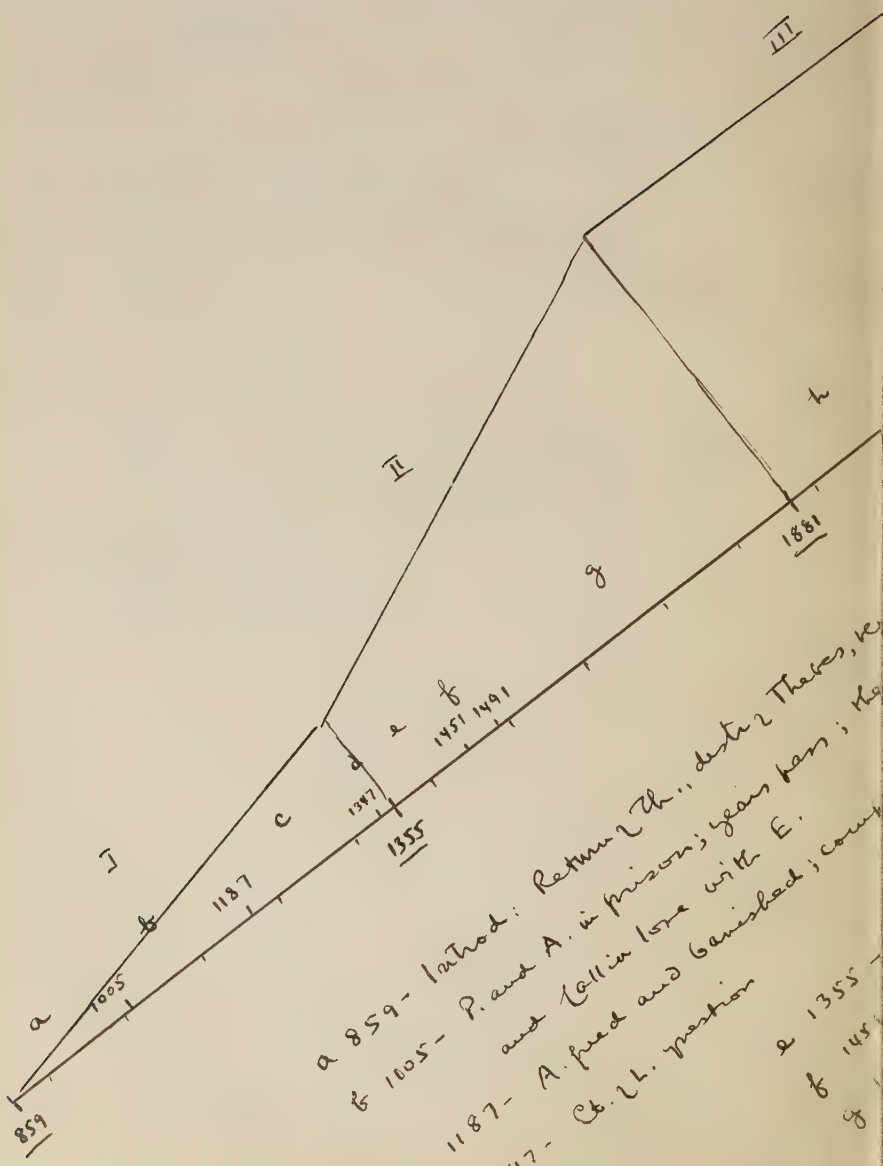


a 859 - Introd: Return of Th., distr. of Thieves, re

b 1005 - P. and A. in prison; years pass; the

and Lellin lose with E.

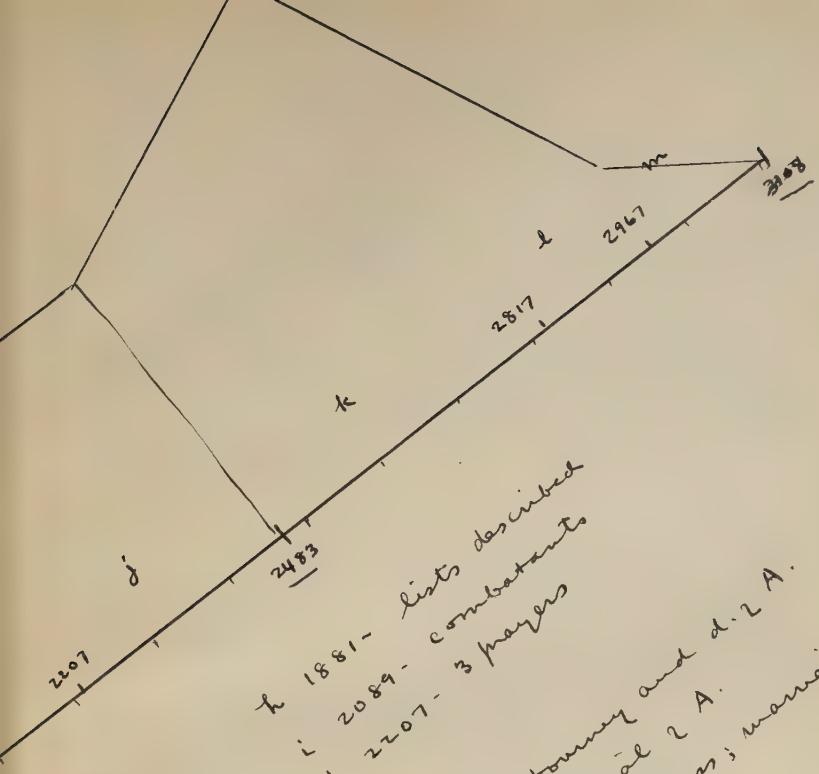
c 1187 - A. fired and banished; comp

d 1347 - Ct. of L. question

e 1355 -

f 145

g



h 1881 - lists described
i 2089 - combatants
j 2207 - 3 prayers

k 2483 - tourney and d. 2 A.
l 2817 - burial 2 A.
m 2967 - years pass; marriage 2 P. and E.

2 A. and P.

...nus as Philostrate
...after 2 years - prison escapes
P. and A meet and fight;
Theseus interrupts and decrees
tourney

like cock + fox

Further cf. descr. of cock 39-44: exagg. of colors - gold, azure, battled - suggests arms of Henry B. "All the colors on Henry's coat and no others, are found on Chauntecleer; and several of them Chaser calls by their heraldic names."

Contemp. satiric verse refers to Henry by bird names - heron, eagle, falcon, etc

Colfox's master, Mowhay, granted by Parl. "golden Truncheon tipped with black at both ends"

Further ||s - fox tricked by talking at wrong time; was too susceptible to flattery

Weeping + lamentation at misfortune of fox || to sympathy at Henry's leaving London into Exile

Sir John Russel one of 5 hated minions of Rich II

In sum: mock-heroic poem with chief int. in char. of Chaunt. + Pert. But prob. that ch. began with occasion, using ||s to historical interest + developed char. afterwards.

Duel 16 Sept '98: exiles left Eng 3 Oct. -

Written soon after. ca. Oct. Nov 1398.

Allusions are [not equations] but]
fugitive. deft suggestions.

Importance of date :- this latest work.

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